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ABSTRACT

This report is the 13th annual survey of censorship and related challenges to public education. The primary sources of information were teachers, librarians, school officials and parents who responded to mailed questionnaires or who contacted the researchers individually. In addition, information was gathered from news reports and various forms of outreach to parents and education professionals. The report is divided into two sections. In section 1, trends are reported and analyzed; section 2 is a state-by-state accounting of attacks on the freedom to learn, in which short descriptions of each documented incident are presented. These case studies illustrate how incidents have played out in communities across the nation. A map of regional and state breakdowns is also provided. Findings indicate the following: attacks overall continue at record levels; censorship remains at near record levels and censors succeed in half of all challenges; scope of challenges to materials widens; no area of public education was left unaffected; Religious right political groups lead the charge; objections based on sexual content, objectionable language, and religion are most frequent; anti-gay objections are on the rise; a new wave of sex education controversies exist; and student newspapers, school plays and magazines are frequent targets. Appendices include lists of most frequently challenged materials, books and authors and states with the most challenges. (AEF)

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ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM TO LEARN

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Most Frequently Challenged Books
1994-1995

More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark
Alvin Schwartz

Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark
Alvin Schwartz

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Maya Angelou

The Giver
Lois Lowry

Halloween ABC
Eve Merriam

Scary Stories 3:
More Tales to Chill Your Bones
Alvin Schwartz

Bridge to Terabithia
Katherine Paterson

The Chocolate War
Robert Cormier

Of Mice and Men
John Steinbeck

My Brother Sam Is Dead
Christopher & James Lincoln Collier

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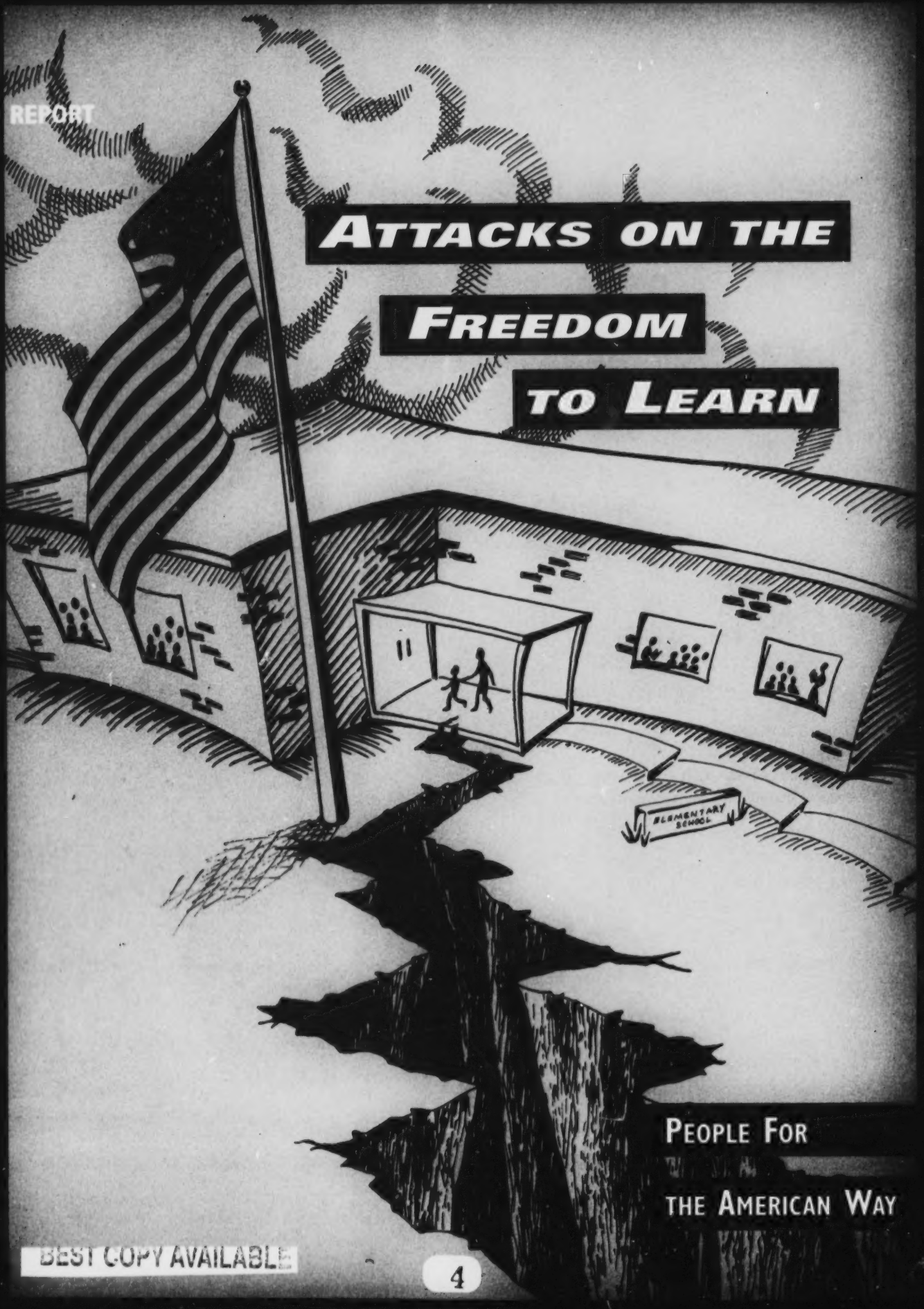

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ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM TO LEARN
1994-1995

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ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM TO LEARN

1994-1995 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 1994-95 edition of *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn* is People For the American Way's 13th annual survey of censorship and related challenges to public education. Our primary source of information in compiling these attacks was the people who experienced them: the teachers, librarians, school officials and parents who either responded to our mailed questionnaires or who contacted our researchers individually. In addition, we gathered information from news reports and various forms of outreach to parents and education professionals.

The report is divided into two sections. In Section One, we report and analyze the various trends that emerged from our research. These findings and analysis are summarized briefly in this executive summary as well. Section Two is our state-by-state accountjng of attacks on the freedom to learn, in which we present short descriptions of each individual incident we have documented. These case studies illustrate in some detail how incidents have played out in communities across the nation. In addition, a series of appendices are included at the end of this report presenting lists of most frequently challenged materials, books and authors, as well a variety of other such compilations.

What is listed surely does not represent every challenge to school materials during the recently concluded 1994-95 school year. We could hardly hope to monitor every effort to restrict educational materials in each of the more than 15,000 school districts in the United States. Indeed, past experience confirms that a large amount of activity goes unreported. The American Library Association has estimated, for example, that for every censorship incident that is reported, four or five go unreported. Therefore, the information provided here is best understood as a representative snapshot of controversies taking place, not a comprehensive accounting.

THIS REPORT FINDS:

• ***Attacks overall continue at record levels:*** The 1994-95 school year saw challenges continue at near record levels. Researchers confirmed 458 challenges in 49 states in all regions of the country. States with the highest number of incidents were California, Texas and Pennsylvania. At the other end of the spectrum, no incidents were reported in the District of Columbia and Hawaii.

• ***Censorship remains near record levels; censors succeed in half of all challenges:*** 338 of the 458 incidents reported this year were cases of attempted censorship — where, for example, demands were made to remove or restrict curricular materials for all students. The success rate of the censors was particularly disturbing. In 50 percent of the reported censorship incidents, challenged materials were removed or restricted in some fashion.

• ***Scope of challenges to materials widens:*** The number of broad-based challenges to public education was up by nearly a third, by comparison to last year's record levels, rising from 87 to 120. These complaints included attempts to incorporate religious activity into the official school day, challenges to Halloween celebrations as "occultic," opposition to counseling services for gay and lesbian teens, efforts to pass pro-censorship legislation and more. In many communities, Religious Right political groups are supporting these efforts as an extension of their censorship activity.

• ***No area of public education was left unaffected:*** Given the increased strength of pro-censorship groups, the effects of their activism are being widely felt. Virtually no aspect of the curriculum is safe from these controversies.

• ***Religious Right political groups lead the charge:*** Fully 18 percent of the incidents reported involved national, state or local Religious Right political organizations. An additional 12 percent of challenges were instances that appeared to have been coordinated or inspired by these same groups. Religious Right political leaders have long focused on public education, and the movement is at the forefront of censorship efforts in the public schools.

• ***Objections based on sexual content, objectionable language, and religion most frequent:*** The most frequent complaint lodged against challenged materials was that the treatment of sexuality was found to be offensive. Second most common were challenges in which materials were deemed to be profane or to contain otherwise objectionable language. The third most common were those in which materials were perceived to be at odds with the objector's religion.

• ***Anti-gay objections on the rise:*** A record 16 percent of reported challenges involved claims that educators were engaged in "promoting" homosexuality. This figure represented a 50 percent increase over last year.

• ***A new wave of sex education controversies:*** Sex education challenges soared in the 1994-95 school year. Researchers documented such controversies in 62 communities across the nation in the past year, many more than last year.

• ***Student newspapers, school plays and magazines frequent targets:*** Student publications, student theatrical productions and magazines continued to be a prime target.

INTRODUCTION

For the past 13 years, People For the American Way has documented a steady rise in censorship activity that reflects an ongoing struggle to redefine education in America. The findings of this year's *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn* demonstrate that the censorship strategy continues to play a central role in efforts to undermine public education even as new and broader challenges are posed to school reform measures, assessment tests, guidance programs and sexuality education. These battles are played out against the backdrop of campaigns for state-coerced school prayer or voucher initiatives designed to divert public school monies to private education.

The primary losers in these battles are three: parents, whose children are denied access to ideas and materials because of the ideological and sectarian controversies being generated; teachers, who are increasingly subjected to intimidation and harassment and who therefore second-guess themselves and cleanse their classrooms of anything that might be "controversial"; and most importantly, schoolchildren themselves, whose access to quality education is invariably diminished by these ideological and sectarian demands. The challenges confronting public education documented in this report have too often turned America's classrooms into battlegrounds. As a result, students are being denied the resources to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to participate and to succeed in an increasingly complex society.

"To remove these books from the core list, books that have been chosen because of their literary value in raising social, political, and moral issues, is to abandon a responsibility that only public education has inherited."

School Administrator, responding to a challenge to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, Santa Cruz, California

In the main, the conflicts taking shape in the public schools today mirror larger societal conflicts. Abortion, gay and lesbian rights, television violence and funding for the arts are all issues that have been played out of late in the courts, in the media, and at the ballot box. The issues to which these conflicts speak are at the heart of the American Way: the scope of free expression, the place of religion in public life, and the extent to which our culture should foster — or at least acknowledge — diversity.

Of course, the vital role the public schools play in determining the future direction of these debates makes them a central target today. It is largely during their years in school that children develop their perceptions of American history and society and of their own rights and responsibilities as citizens.

The incidents in this report illustrate the confrontation of two opposing views of the role of public schools in preparing tomorrow's citizens. The generally accepted view has been that young people should be challenged intellectually in school, that they should be taught to think critically, to solve problems, and to use their judgment and imagination. Concomitant with this vision of education is the belief that as these critical-thinking skills develop, a respect for the opinions of others should be fostered. The philosophy advanced by many of the challengers whose handiwork is the substance of this report conceives public education as something quite different — less a vehicle for education, and more a method of fostering ideological conformity. This view eschews education that fosters imagination, critical thinking and recognition of pluralism. Its proponents

want students to be "protected" from books and theories that may challenge their own beliefs and assumptions. In short, they believe that children should be told what to think, not taught how to think for themselves. Material that does not conform to this narrow view is often accused of undermining parental or scriptural authority, or of being "New Age" or "invasive."

In preparing this report, People For the American Way researchers again found that the objectors who embrace this narrow view of education are often connected to or inspired by one or more Religious Right political groups. National and state political organizations have continued to develop sophisticated networks. Through direct mail, newsletters, videos, cable and over-the-airwaves broadcasts and more, they are able to reach activists at the local level, who often form strong alliances with local churches and ministers. Working in their communities, these activists have combined potent pressure tactics, community organizing, and increasingly, the threat of litigation to create an effective censorship machine. While objectors often justify their demands by claiming to be acting as parents concerned about the education of their children, a deeper agenda becomes evident when demands are made that district-approved books and materials be withdrawn not just from *their* children, but from *all* children.

"If abstinence is the only piece of education being taught to students, we are sticking our heads in the sand. Because kids out there are sexually active."

Teacher, Beaverton, Oregon

This year People For the American Way researchers documented an enormous expansion of a trend that first became visible last year: objectors are casting a considerably wider net than ever before in their efforts to redefine public education. While censorship has, over the years, proven to be an effective strategy toward this end, more and more frequently objectors are exploring other means of accomplishing their goals. Often these new tactics have considerably broader impact than working to censor a single book, but they are borne of the same narrow understanding of the nature of public education.

The broader scope of the challenges described here is reflected in this year's report. The bulk of this report deals with censorship attempts — efforts to remove books or curricular material for *all* children. But increasingly, our research is turning up incidents that, while not outright censorship, share the aim of imposing a measure of religious or political orthodoxy on the classroom. These incidents included campaigns to inject state-coerced prayer into the classroom or to adopt new and restrictive policies concerning educational materials, efforts in state legislatures to pass legislation making censorship easier at the local level, and more. These incidents are part and parcel of a censorship trend that has been on a steady long-term upswing for years and shows no signs of abating.

INCIDENT CRITERIA

This report is based on extensive research documenting two categories of incidents. The first category of incident is an act of attempted censorship. We include in this category incidents in which challengers initiate efforts to remove

from a classroom, library or curriculum, books or other materials or programs. Notably, preventing only one's own child from using materials or participating in a program is not regarded as attempted censorship. To be included in this report as an act of attempted censorship, a challenge must attempt to control what other parents' children may have access to. Neither have we included challenges in which citizens first requested removal, but promptly accepted offers to remove their children from the activities in question and withdrew their complaints. Also not included in this category are incidents where challengers raised clear issues of pedagogy, as opposed to issues of religion or ideology. This first category also includes instances where students' legitimate freedom of expression is unduly restricted. The second category of incident in this report is a broad-based challenge. This category includes attempts by individuals or organizations to inject their own ideological or sectarian agenda into the educational process. These incidents include efforts to distort textbook selection processes by bringing ideological or sectarian pressure, or advancing legislation or other initiatives that would inject such considerations.

"The overall feeling of the students is these parents are acting in an irrational manner."

Sixteen-year-old student in response to attempts to censor *Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Hendersonville, Tennessee

1994-95 FINDINGS

ATTACKS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION BROADEN

The state-by-state listings that follow this analysis document the broadest assault on public education People For the American Way has ever reported. Although the total number of incidents reported to People For has remained about the same as last year's record high, this year's report tells a far more complex story than in previous years. In years past, opponents of public education put their energies into attempts to censor books and other educational materials; this year we see them continuing to bring those challenges, but broadening their range of targets, and, more significantly, also bringing pressure on the public schools in other ways, such as trying to reinstate school prayer and the teaching of Creationism, halt education reform efforts, repeal important education statutes, and divert public funds to private education through voucher programs. Another aspect of the complex story told in the report that follows is that often those who are seeking to impose a religious, political or ideological agenda in the public schools are actually inside the school district — teachers, administrators, or school board members. Finally, the attacks on the freedom to learn this year reflect the broader political climate, both in their conservative origins and in their use of anti-government rhetoric against educators and schools.

People For researchers uncovered 458 challenges in the 1994-95 school year, including 338 incidents of attempted censorship and 120 broad-based challenges to public education. The fact that the overall numbers remained high and the broad-based challenges increased significantly indicates that the battle to define American education continues unabated while becoming more complex and multi-faceted.

In fact, efforts to undermine the public schools are taking place in every region of the country, in cities, suburbs and rural areas. In all, 49 states are represented in this report. For the third year in a row, California outpaced all other states, with 44 incidents. Texas saw the second highest number with 28. Pennsylvania was third with 27 incidents.

Challenges are occurring with the most frequency in the Western region of the country (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming), which saw 125 incidents. The Midwestern region (Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin) ran a very close second with 123 incidents. The Southern region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia) had 121 incidents; and the Northeastern region (Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont) had 89 incidents.

This year, more than ever before, no area of public education was safe from controversy. Attempts were made to censor literature anthologies, health textbooks, history texts, novels and films used in the classroom; books and magazines available in libraries; material on optional, supplemental and summer reading lists; school newspapers and literary magazines; self-esteem programs, health and sex education curricula; student-performed plays; student art exhibits, assemblies; student speeches; and materials used in teacher training.

"If I had my way, I wouldn't allow any mention of things such as breast cancer and self-examination, cancer of the testicles and self-examination, menstruation. . . and the like in a coed setting."

Objector to health education curriculum, Cody, Wyoming

In addition, challengers at the state and local levels, many of them affiliated with Religious Right political groups, took aim at school reform initiatives, assessment tests, optional counseling services, field trips and holiday celebrations. At the same time, many of these groups pressed for school prayer, Creationism, school vouchers, and fear-based, abstinence-only sexuality education programs.

CENSORSHIP

1. WHAT IS BEING CHALLENGED

Classics and young adult standards in use in literature classes were among the books challenged in 1994-95. Titles included *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *Sula* and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier and *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein. For the second year in a row, a disproportionate number of works by African

American women were challenged: Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou were frequent targets, with Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* being the third most challenged work this year.

•In Goffstown, New Hampshire, an objector alleged that the use of *The Catcher in the Rye* in a tenth-grade English class "indoctrinates atheism."

•In Cookeville, Tennessee, a school superintendent, who admitted he had not read the book, ordered that *Of Mice and Men* be removed from a ninth-grade honors English class for profanity. The book was later reinstated after angry parents, educators and community members protested its removal.

•In Louisville, Kentucky, an objector requested that *As I Lay Dying* be removed from an eleventh-grade English class and the teacher disciplined for teaching it, because it contains profanity and has a character who questions the existence of God.

"The parent has every right to say her child will not read that book. At the same time, the parent has no right to say that my child cannot read the book. It's that simple."

School board member in response to a challenge to a collection of short stories in a high school library, Charleston, South Carolina

Of the 338 censorship attempts documented in these pages, an alarming 41 percent were to books and other materials in libraries, works no one is required to read. These challenges most clearly betray the censors' intent, or at least their failure to grasp the nature of the educational process. They see libraries not as places where students can reach beyond the curriculum and explore areas of particular interest, but only as places where students might stumble onto a fact, an idea or a concept with which the censors disagree; thus, their attempts to "cleanse" library collections of all such material. Similarly, many challenges were leveled against books and materials on optional or recommended reading lists or in supplemental use in classrooms — again, books no child was required to read.

Sex An Even Hotter Topic

The battle over when, how and to what extent public schools should deal with sexuality continued unabated and was the basis for many curricular and library challenges this year. Many of these challenges were to sexual content in library selections or on optional reading lists.

• In Ventura, California, *The Kitchen God's Wife* by Amy Tan, on a recommended reading list for tenth graders, was challenged for being "sexually explicit."

• In Redmond, Oregon, a review committee voted to require parental permission for students in a tenth-grade honors English class to read the award-winning play *Equus* by Peter Shaffer, because of its sexual messages and "affronts to Christianity."

Other challenges were leveled at sexuality and health education materials.

• In Texas, at the state Board of Education and then in many local communities, the adoption of health textbooks sparked controversy. Religious Right political groups led the opposition to the inclusion of life-saving information on contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. One state school board member opposing the books went so far as to contact all school board presidents in her district to remind them that they had the option of spending taxpayers' money to buy the books and then shelve them rather than putting them to use in classrooms.

• In Little Falls, Minnesota, objectors to *Values and Choices*, a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, used materials warning of the "sexually stimulating" nature of sex education.

• In Conway, New Hampshire, during a battle over a classroom demonstration of condom use, one objector wrote a letter to the editor to the local paper expressing the view that formal sex education is "a rape of the mind."

Finally, many objectors demanded the removal of literature from libraries and classes for "sexual content."

• In Gainesville, Florida, Judy Blume's *Forever* was removed from an eighth-grade classroom library following a complaint about its alleged sexual content. The objector claimed that the book reinforced the idea that "sex is OK at their age."

• In Morrisville, Pennsylvania, a school board member led a successful campaign to get Nobel laureate Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* removed from an elective high school English class because of a rape scene.

• In Oxford, Alabama, when a principal objected to a line drawing of a nude female torso in a mythology book and threatened to remove the book, the librarian kept the book in the middle school library's collection by sketching a bathing-suit top on the drawing.

Student Expression a Frequent Target

People For the American Way's research documented an increase in challenges to student expression of all types: student newspapers and literary magazines; plays and assemblies; student art exhibits; student speakers; and even slogans on students' T-shirts. Most often, objectors were attempting to eliminate discussion of controversial issues or soften criticism of schools or school policies. In the case of student publications, school officials' authority relied largely on the Supreme Court's 1988 decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, in which the Court held that a high school principal could ban student-authored articles on divorce

and teen pregnancy from the school-sponsored student newspaper. Six states — Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas and Massachusetts — have passed their own student freedom of expression bills, giving students broader rights than the *Hazelwood* decision allowed them. But some school officials have interpreted *Hazelwood* as granting them broad, even unchecked, authority. In some cases, student journalists who balk at the censorship of the school-sanctioned newspapers have started their own "underground" newspapers, only to find those censored as well.

• In Michigan, a principal vowed to censor future issues of a school newspaper after an editorial was published advocating gay rights.

• In Indianapolis, Indiana, school officials withheld an entire edition of the school paper in which an African American student wrote a strongly worded column criticizing the behavior of other African American students. Weeks later, the principal censored an article about the lives of two gay students.

• In Marietta, Georgia, an assistant principal refused to allow a middle school student's poem, entitled "H.I.V.," to be published in the school's literary journal because it contained the words "queer" and "dyke" to illustrate the persecution of people with HIV/AIDS.

"High school is supposed to be preparing us for reality. Aren't sex, pregnancy, AIDS, and other STDS reality? These things are out there, aren't they? What better way to attempt to prevent them than through education, but no! That's not the way things work."

High school student responding to a principal's censorship of articles on teen-age sex in a student newspaper, Atlanta, Georgia

Student drama productions were also a target of would-be censors, even in instances where the plays had been previously approved by school administrators, and where profanity had already been cut. Still, the censors found a basis for a religious, political or ideological objection and sought cancellation of plays rather than simply not attending the play or not allowing their own child to participate in the activity.

• In Granby, Missouri, a drama teacher resigned after a committee was established to review and select all future plays following objections to a production of Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*, from which all profanity had already been edited.

• In Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a superintendent canceled a high school production of the musical *Falsettoland* after parents, one of whom is a local minister, claimed that the play's gay theme violated a state criminal obscenity law.

There were also a number of attempts to censor student artists, most often for nudity in their artwork.

• In Portsmouth, Rhode Island, after a principal removed a display of student art, claiming it was inappropriate, the teachers' union filed a grievance, and the superintendent agreed that art exhibits would not be censored again.

• In New Castle, Delaware, an assistant principal objected to a National Scholastic Award-winning drawing of a nude female, and removed it from a student art show after the art instructor refused to do so. The faculty wrote a letter expressing outrage at the removal, but the administration did not respond.

Finally, individual student speakers, particularly at graduation ceremonies, have frequently been censored this year. Whether for sharing their religious faith or referring to a controversial topic, students have been silenced.

• In Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, the high school salutatorian sat silently at her graduation ceremony after school officials edited her speech to make it "more appropriate," removing references to her rape by a fellow student three years earlier and her expressions of gratitude to the community for its support. She chose not to speak at all rather than deliver the edited speech.

• In Dallas, Texas, school officials objected to a valedictorian's commencement speech for being "too heavy-duty religious," simply because she spoke about how important God and the Bible are in her life. After she and her parents consulted an attorney, the school officials allowed her to deliver the speech.

"As a Christian, I think the Lord wants us to be concerned with loving others and I think the whole holiday of Halloween is involved in scaring others and evilness. I think that the kids see it so often . . . I think they slowly become desensitized to the occult."

Parent supporting a decision to cancel Halloween celebration in an elementary school, Schaumburg, Illinois

• In Landisville, Pennsylvania, a high school valedictorian who is Buddhist did not attend her own graduation after school officials refused to allow her to give a speech that was critical of school prayer. She was replaced by another student speaker who ended her speech with a request that those present join her in prayer.

2. WHY MATERIALS ARE CHALLENGED

Objections Based on Sexual Content, Objectionable Language and Religion Most Frequent

Several years ago we characterized the leading reasons for censorship as "sex, swear words and Satan," and those categories lead the list of objections again this year.

Of the 338 censorship attempts in the 1994-95 school year, nearly a third involved charges that the treatment of sexuality was offensive. Such works as Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid were challenged on the grounds that they contained sexual situations or references.

• In Annapolis, Maryland, a school official attempted to remove Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, which had been approved years before for use in ninth-grade honors English, because it contained references to "mutating babies and sex."

• In Chandler, Arizona, objectors sought removal of the Newbery Award-winning children's book *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George on the grounds that it contains a scene in which a man forcibly kisses his wife.

In 29 percent of the incidents, the basis for the attempt to censor was that the book or other material contained profanity or other "objectionable" language. Complaints of this type were usually lodged by those who took "objectionable" words and passages out of context while not being embarrassed to admit that they had not read the material they were seeking to ban. Some of these targets include *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *Ordinary People* by Judith Guest.

• In Warrens, Wisconsin, an objector requested removal of *Bridge to Terabithia* for containing the words "Good Lord."

• In Palmyra, Pennsylvania, a school board member and parent objected to Christopher and James Lincoln Collier's *My Brother Sam Is Dead* because it contained the word "goddamn."

• In Alturas, California, objectors requested that Bette Greene's *Summer of My German Soldier* be transferred from a seventh-grade English class to the high school curriculum because of its profanity.

The charge that materials were "anti-Christian" or endorsed a religion other than Christianity surfaced in 18 percent of the incidents. Charges of endorsement usually took the form of complaints that materials were "satanic," "occultic" or "New Age," or that they "promoted" witchcraft. In some cases objectors further claimed that by using materials that were, for instance, "New Age," the public schools were violating the separation of church and state. This tactic, defining new religions and finding them in everything from guidance programs to literary classics, presents an opportunity to remove any material that is not firmly grounded in the challengers' religious faith.

"This book has words in it that even unsaved people would have spanked their children for saying. Take this book out of the system completely. You say they need to know — they don't need to know. Our country is headed to hell because of the devil and his language. We have to turn this trend around."

A local pastor objecting to *Death Be Not Proud* by John Gunther, Tarboro, North Carolina

• In Eldred, Pennsylvania, an objector sought removal of *Bunya the Witch* from an elementary school library, claiming its purpose is "to get children caught up in witchcraft."

• In Greer's Ferry, Arkansas, a fourth-grade teacher tore Terri Fields' *Fourth-Graders Don't Believe in Witches* to pieces in front of her students after the principal instructed her to remove the book from the class because it discusses witches.

• In Bemidji, Minnesota *The Jane Fonda Yoga Workout* video was challenged for being offensive as a religion.

• In Hayward, Wisconsin, the chairman of the local Christian Coalition chapter argued that a classroom construction of the Native American symbol for good luck "fast approaches the line between education and indoctrination" and was a violation of the separation of church and state.

Censorship Attempts from the Left

A small number of challenges this year can be described as coming from the political Left. Sixteen incidents this year, or about five percent, involved charges of racism against African Americans or Native Americans. Mark Twain's classic, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, continues to be a target, challenged in three communities during the 1994-95 school year.

• In Suquamish, Washington, *On to Oregon* by Honore Morrow was removed from a fourth-grade class, for containing language offensive to Native Americans.

• In Bemidji, Minnesota, Lynne Reid Banks' *The Indian in the Cupboard* and *The Return of the Indian* were challenged for promoting negative stereotypes of Native Americans.

In some cases, school districts responded to these challenges by retaining the challenged work and, in addition, seeking ways to expand educational opportunities. For instance, in Santa Cruz, California, in response to objections, the district has modified the curriculum to ensure that *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are taught in their appropriate historical context.

"I am beginning to wonder if they want a program that is progressive for the students, or one that caters to the whims of the religious conservatives. I believe in order to avoid controversy the district bends to the will of the minority who speaks loudest."

Drama teacher commenting on a principal's decision to cancel a production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Chehalis, Washington

3. THE CENSORS' SUCCESS

Censors successful in 50 percent of challenges

This year, censors were successful in removing or restricting access to challenged materials in 164 instances, fully 50 percent of the cases that were resolved during the reporting period. This figure is higher than in any of the 13 years we have published this report. Even though more and more school districts have instituted written procedures to deal with objections to materials, the challengers have more than kept pace in their ability to apply political pressure to achieve their ends. Intensified grassroots efforts and the advice and materials of outside organizations have led to the removal of a high portion of challenged materials.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

1. SCHOOL OFFICIALS ARE OFTEN CENSORS

While well-drafted review policies are an effective weapon in the fight against censorship, they are not always, in and of themselves, sufficient. Even the best of these policies relies on implementors who value academic freedom and who are more committed to pedagogy than to politics. Unfortunately, not all school districts have such officials.

An alarming finding in this year's report is that a large number of those seeking to impose political, religious and ideological pressures on the public schools are education officials themselves: teachers, administrators, librarians and school board members. As those who believe that educational materials selection should be based on religion and ideology have started to take seats on local school boards, and as they have otherwise begun to flex their political muscles, censorship has often followed. Of equal concern is the fact that some administrators, teachers and librarians are also willing to censor, either to avoid controversy or to impose their own ideology.

"We have the right to say what our children should read. If children are able to choose for themselves, why did God give them parents?"

A parent supporting removal of Alvin Schwartz's *More Scary Stories To Tell In the Dark*, Lawtey, Florida

For the past five years at least, national Religious Right political groups have placed a high priority on getting their followers elected to school boards, with the stated purpose of promoting their ideology in the public school curriculum. This year's report shows the success of those efforts. In many incidents, right-wing school board members have advocated censorship or opposed comprehensive sexuality education, removed books because of profanity or sexual content, and halted education reform efforts. Without strong school boards committed to high quality education, censorship has thrived in many communities.

• In West Chester, Pennsylvania, a school board member objected to Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* for sexual content.

• In West Covina, California, conservative school board members canceled a teacher training on lesbian and gay youth, alleging that it would promote homosexuality.

• In Tempe, Arizona, the school board president went to a dress rehearsal of the play *Sex Lives of Superheroes* and ordered a monologue omitted or the play canceled. The students involved chose cancellation. Even though the board president admitted that he had violated school policy, the board voted to ratify his action. Outraged parents, students and community members protested, with one parent calling his actions a "clear violation of freedoms."

2. ANTI-GAY CHALLENGES CONTINUE TO RISE

As controversies over gay rights escalated in the public policy arena — the Congress, state legislatures, courts and the ballot box — pro-censorship advocates more than kept pace in the schools. Nearly 16 percent of the incidents in this year's report involved claims that the schools were "promoting" homosexuality. Generally, the "promotion" amounted to nothing more than acknowledging homosexuality. These charges were leveled at library books, classroom materials and sex education programs alike.

The high number of anti-gay challenges is not surprising, given recent activity in Congress and the state legislatures. Last year and this have witnessed efforts in Congress to pass legislation that would cut off federal funding to school districts that "promote, condone, accept or celebrate homosexuality." In addition, several state legislatures have considered similar measures. When political leaders are so intolerant of diversity and appear to be making public policy based on division and hateful rhetoric, it is not remarkable that citizens would follow their lead at the local level

"I can decide for my children, but other parents should have the right to decide for their children also, and we can't take away their right by removing the book from the shelf."

School board member commenting on attempts to remove *More Scary Stories To Tell in the Dark*, Lawtey, Florida

• In Port Charlotte, Florida, objectors used their challenge to Mary Renault's *The Last of the Wine* for homosexual content as an opportunity to show the right-wing viciously anti-gay video, "The Gay Agenda," at a school board meeting and to accuse a former Teacher of the Year of being a sexual "predator."

• In Madison, Wisconsin, a parent objected to the biography of writer James Baldwin in a series titled *Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians*, and requested that it be removed from a middle school library because it was written to "lure" and "attract children at an early age to the gay and lesbian lifestyle."

• In Sawyers Bar, California, a parent objected to the fact that Bert and Ernie lived together on *Sesame Street*, and expressed concern that episodes of the program being shown in a kindergarten class might promote homosexuality.

3. FILMS UNDER ATTACK

The number of attempts to censor the showing of films in public school classrooms rose sharply this year, with a substantial number of incidents involving blanket bans on the showing of films altogether or, more commonly, on the showing of films that have a specific rating. Of particular interest is the number of times that a showing of *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg's moving, Academy Award-winning film about the Holocaust, sparked controversy. Objections arose, even though educators had ensured that parental permission was obtained before the R-rated film was to be shown.

• In Barre, Vermont, objectors sought cancellation of *Schindler's List*, to be shown to eighth-graders, even though parental permission had been secured. When controversy arose, the community expressed strong support, and the film was eventually — after a postponement — shown to the students.

• In Marion, Ohio, a school board member ordered the principal to cover the projector during scenes of nudity and violence during the showing of *Schindler's List*, even though all students viewing it had obtained parental permission. After the film company notified the school that the film could not be edited, it was shown uncut.

In a number of districts, school boards and administrators developed policies on the showing of films; however, often they were overbroad. In one case, the policy prohibited the showing of PG-13 films to high school students, even with parental permission.

• In Minnesota's Anoka-Hennepin school district, a school board member instituted a district-wide ban on R-rated films after *The Piano* was selected by students for a special project in a college level high school course. The ban was later repealed.

• In Galt, California, the school board revised its film policy to require parental permission, as well as review and editing, of all R- and PG-13-rated films.

"If these people want to bet that their kids are not having sex, they'd better be willing to bet their children's lives on that . . . I'm outraged that they would want to restrict the flow of information that could save kids' lives."

Representative of an AIDS service agency, banned from participating in teacher training workshops on HIV/AIDS amid charges that their participation would promote sexual activity, Ventura County, California

4. EXPLOSION OF BROAD-BASED CHALLENGES

Although the incidents in this report have been categorized here for practical purposes, the on-the-ground reality is that incidents often become fluid as battles are played out in communities across the nation. What begins as a challenge to a library book can evolve into a broader attack on the curriculum, or on educational reform. A failed censorship complaint might lead a disgruntled objector to run for a seat on the school board. Whatever the methods, the motives remain the same: placing demands on school districts that are rooted in religion and ideology, at the expense of pedagogy.

In last year's report we documented a remarkable rise in the category of incidents we have labeled broad-based challenges. That trend continues in this year's report. It is an indication of how wide a net challengers are casting in their effort to redefine public education. The number of broad-based challenges, in which organizations or individuals applied ideological or sectarian-based pressure on the public schools without necessarily calling for the censorship of specific curricular materials or student expression, rose to an alarming total of 120. Also remarkable, and indeed, unprecedented, is the range of materials and activities that came under scrutiny. No stone was left unturned: groups mounted campaigns against school reform, helped lead an energized school prayer movement, worked to institute school voucher programs, and even sought, in some states, to repeal state school codes.

The Attack on School Reform

Most Religious Right political groups continue to challenge a wide array of educational reforms, including Goals 2000 and outcome based education (OBE), and, given the changed political scene in the Congress and state legislatures, they have had a lot of assistance from policy makers. Redesigning education around high standards for student performance is at the heart of school reform, and it has been endorsed by such prominent groups as the Business Roundtable, the National Governors' Association, and the Education Commission of the States (ECS). According to ECS, at least 40 states are now moving toward an outcome-based system. However, OBE has encountered organized and bitter opposition from a number of state and national political organizations, including Peg Luksik's National Parents Commission, headquartered in Pennsylvania, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, Concerned Women for America, and Focus on the Family. Activists representing these groups are traveling across the country as part of an intense campaign to thwart adoption of this school reform. In doing so, they use an array of vague charges and distortions while advancing a series of conspiracy theories.

Typically, under OBE, state and local school boards develop a set of broad goals that articulate the basic purposes of the public schools — including the general body of skills and academic knowledge they want students to develop. In addition, these goals speak to the broadly defined societal values set by the local community for schools to work to inculcate in students — such consensus values as citizenship, integrity, independence, critical thinking, and tolerance of diversity. Based on these broad goals, boards generally then establish specific "outcomes" which serve both as graduation requirements or guidelines for curriculum design. The outcomes describe what skills and knowledge students must be able to demonstrate when they advance from grade to grade or leave the school system, replacing the traditional method of accrediting students by credit hours. Under OBE, schools judge students' progress by their mastery of a particular subject, not by how much time they have spent in a particular class.

"When you present information about the contributions of famous gay, lesbian and bisexual people, you are promoting."

A minister opposing a proposal to discuss lesbian and gay issues in the curriculum, Des Moines, Iowa

Almost always, the specific required outcomes needed to advance are limited to those that are academic in nature — outcomes that make up the overwhelming majority of most OBE standards. Nevertheless, opponents such as Peg Luksik and Phyllis Schlafly have seized on the handful of "affective" goals, goals less directly linked to academics, to portray OBE as "psychological manipulation of children" that would indoctrinate them into "New Age globalism," "atheism," "secular humanism," "occultic practices," "homosexuality," and "radical guilt about racism."

Faced with a vociferous and organized opposition, some state officials and educators are backing away from OBE or similar education reforms.

• Kansas legislators removed from the state Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) program an outcome having to do with students' physical and emotional well-being, after Concerned Women for America, Citizens for

Excellence in Education and the Eagle Forum organized against QPA across the state. The effect of the loss of this outcome will be the removal of sexuality and health education from curricula in many school districts.

• In Oregon, after the state legislature voted to strengthen education reform, conservative groups began a petition drive to place a measure on the ballot that, if passed, would repeal the entire education reform effort.

• In Maine, Religious Right political groups organized against the Maine Common Core of Learning. One objector stated: "Outcome based education is educational anarchy guaranteeing only that your child is being bred as a worker bee for an elite ruling class who see themselves so superior that they alone are capable of governing the 'New World Order.'"

"To the extent that homosexuality is a factor in people's lives, in history, in the arts, in politics, and in relationships, it should be presented realistically and honestly as part of the way the world is."

From a statement by thirty Des Moines clergy in response to the debate over the curriculum proposal, Des Moines, Iowa

The battle over outcome based education has expanded to the federal program passed last year establishing the Goals 2000 program. Responding to pressure from the Right, several states debated whether to accept this relatively string-free federal money to aid them in reform efforts. New Hampshire and Virginia rejected first-year funding and Montana, having accepted it, has now rejected second-year funding. In addition, there is now a strong movement in the newly right-wing Congress to repeal the Goals 2000 program altogether. The Goals 2000 law sets national voluntary standards and encourages local districts to involve parents and the community, including businesses, in the development of standards for local schools. Religious Right political leaders have widely mischaracterized Goals 2000, claiming erroneously that it requires local districts to meet national standards, and that it will take control away from local districts and give it to the federal government. As in the general OBE debate, the rhetoric of the Right on Goals 2000 omits important factual information and plays on parents' anxieties about their children's future. Opponents have made such baseless charges as an allegation that the Goals 2000 program requires the establishment of school-based health clinics required to distribute condoms, or that students will be forced into community service, a practice that "points society toward a collective socialism." In fact, Goals 2000 offers much of what the Religious Right has been advocating for years: local control of schools, more parental involvement in public education, and a curriculum that will develop the practical skills and knowledge students need to live and work as productive adults.

But as the OBE battles play out in local communities, advocates of public education and opponents of OBE often find themselves talking past one another. In incident after incident in this report, proponents of reform struggled to defend the actual content of local reforms against fantastic charges bearing no relationship to the program in question.

• In Garrett County, Maryland, objections were raised by community activists, including a member of the Christian Coalition, to the outcome based education plan that had been in place in the curriculum for several years. One school board member objected to the teaching of "universalism." Said the school board president, "It used to be patriotism. . . that we enjoy where we came from

and that we're proud to be Americans and stuff, but now it's more like we're part of the world. Like it's okay to be in the United Nations, to serve in the U.N. . . . it's not okay to just say 'I'm an American.' This may be the kind of stuff that's coming down."

As noted above, Religious Right political groups, through the use of distortions and ideological attacks, have been successful in various states in their attempts to thwart major educational reform, but equally important, they have used the hot-button phrase, "outcome based education," as an organizing and fundraising tool in their broader campaign to take control of America's public schools. They have been so successful that the debate on OBE has often not even focused on OBE; it has instead focused on opponents' erroneous allegations about OBE. As intended, the facts have been lost in the rhetoric.

Legislative Attacks on Public Education

"Do we consider high school students so immature that they cannot be responsible for their own reading? This is an outrage."

Parent in Redmond, Oregon, commenting on the decision to require parental permission of students wishing to read *Equus* by Peter Shaffer

As state legislatures and governors have taken a step to the right, anti-public education legislation has been more frequently introduced, passed and signed into law. This year's report documents legislative attempts to divert public education funds to private and religious schools through voucher programs; parental rights amendments that would not only aid censors' attempts to control curricula, but might even hinder attempts to investigate and prosecute child abuse; and finally, in several states, legislation to repeal or completely gut state education statutes, eliminating state standards for such basic matters as school-building safety and teacher certification. This legislative assault on public education seems based on the faulty assumption that educators and parents have different goals for the public schools when, in fact, they share a commitment to the best possible education for America's students.

• In Texas, a voucher bill passed in the state Senate but was removed from an omnibus education bill in the House.

• In Wisconsin, Gov. Tommy Thompson is expected to sign into law a bill passed by the legislature that would expand the Milwaukee voucher program to religious schools, despite a court ruling that such an expansion would be unconstitutional.

• In Massachusetts, a bill was proposed to require written parental consent before any "morally or religiously sensitive" topic can be discussed in classrooms. The bill was later revised to restrict discussion of sexuality education topics and homosexuality. It was still pending in the legislature as this report went to press.

• In Michigan, Gov. John Engler led an effort to repeal the entire state school code, thus doing away with state regulations on curriculum, safety and teacher certification. Around the same time, the state board of education enacted a mission statement with so many religious references that one minister in the state commented, "I didn't know it was part of their job to promote religion."

Creationism is Back

Despite Supreme Court rulings that teaching the theory of Creationism constitutes religious doctrine, this year saw a resurgent effort to include Creationism in the public school science curriculum. Attributable in part to the increased number of school board members affiliated with Religious Right political groups, on whose agendas Creationism ranks high, the movement shows no sign of abating.

• In Plano, Texas, Religious Right-affiliated school board members moved to introduce the pro-Creationism "science" textbook *Of Pandas and People* into science classes.

• In Merrimack, New Hampshire, a local minister sparked a community controversy when he asked the local school board to add Creationism to the science curriculum. He brought a speaker to town from the Institute for Creation Research, but outraged community members' reactions caused him to withdraw his proposal for now.

• In Livingston Parish, Louisiana, the school board agreed to consider proposed lesson plans from Creationism advocates who have expressed the view that the district's science curriculum is "a direct affront to our basic Christian beliefs."

"Some comments were made that kids shouldn't think about this stuff . . . In five years, these kids are going to be voting."

High school principal, opposing the school board's decision to remove a science textbook because it contained information about contraception and abortion, Palmyra, New Jersey

Other Challenges

Additional broad-based challenges included challenges to Halloween celebrations, optional counseling services, and a wide array of other school activities and programs.

• In Schaumburg, Illinois, school officials discontinued the Halloween party and parade in an elementary school. One parent who supported the cancellation commented, "kids see it so often . . . I think they slowly become desensitized to the occult." Four nearby schools followed suit and modified their Halloween celebrations.

• In St. Paul, Minnesota, the local Catholic Defense League issued a warning to the school district objecting to a gay and lesbian support group in a high school.

• In Utah, a member of the committee working on the bid to host the 2002 Winter Olympics, fearful of reaction in the international community, persuaded a statewide student debate committee to drop as a debate topic the issue of whether or not Utah should host the Olympics.

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Much of the activity documented in this report can be traced to a handful of Religious Right political organizations working against public education at the local, state and federal levels. Eighteen percent of the censorship attempts and broader challenges listed in this report bear the fingerprints of these national organizations or their local affiliates. Although other factors, and occasionally other organizations, are at work in the rise of censorship activity, no other force is as focused, widespread or organized.

• In Greensburg, Pennsylvania, a local activist with assistance from the Christian Coalition (as well as from United We Stand) succeeded in having *Literature in Society* removed from an elective twelfth-grade English class because the 1,500-page anthology contains the word "nigger," taken from an excerpt of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and references to menstruation and homosexuality in Nikki Giovanni's "Woman Poem."

• In Round Rock, Texas, objectors with the assistance of Citizens for Excellence in Education attempted to remove *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* from classroom use for containing profanity and "encouraging" premarital sex and homosexuality. The Texas director of Citizens for Excellence in Education asserted that the author's ethnicity "doesn't give them the right to titillate our kids whether they are red, black, brown, yellow or white."

"I found many of the books depressing. Literature should be uplifting."

School board member commenting on challenged award-winning books, West Chester, Pennsylvania

• In Memphis, Tennessee, the Christian Educators Association joined in an attempt to remove *The Bell Jar* and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, on the grounds that the books were too realistic and contained sexually explicit scenes.

In truth, Religious Right organizations are undoubtedly involved in many more challenges than the 18 percent figure would indicate. Over the years, national and state Religious Right political groups have come to understand that their visible presence in a community can hinder their efforts, and, as a result, have from time to time adopted "stealth" tactics, making activity difficult to track. It is for that reason that these groups often seek to obscure their affiliations, and sometimes their principal objections. One organization that frequently employs this tactic of the "secular alias" is Dr. Robert L. Simonds' Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE). The activist arm of Simonds' National Association of Christian Educators, CEE has spawned hundreds of local chapters, many of which seek to hide their sectarian motivations. In Pennsylvania, for example, CEE is affiliated with the Pennsylvania Coalition for Academic Excellence (PCAE). Initially, this group maintained it had no affiliation with CEE and Simonds. Eventually, local mainstream activists uncovered a PCAE brochure urging contributors to PCAE to make their membership checks payable to Citizens for Excellence in Education! Similarly, local CEE chapters travel under a variety of names, many of which suggest, but do not acknowledge, their relationship to the Simonds operation.

These national Religious Right organizations also offer counsel and materials to the local groups, and in at least some circumstances, the thrust of the advice is to obscure their sectarian motivations. Thus one group, coaching its followers on how to argue for the removal of materials from the schools while avoiding Religious Right buzzwords, advised, "DO NOT CALL THE MATERIAL HUMANISTIC"! (Even though you know it is)."

Religious Right organizations are clearly responsible for inspiring many more challenges than even our extensive research can document. The leaders of these groups make no effort to mask their hostility toward the public schools, even describing public education as "child abuse" in the classroom. Preying on the fears of parents and exploiting a legitimate concern for the quality of our schools, these groups have concocted a host of conspiracy theories purporting to describe what is being taught in the public schools. These charges include assertions that materials in use in the schools promote "New Age religion," "satanism," "eastern religions," "the homosexual agenda/lifestyle," "psychiatric testing," and the long-standing "secular humanism." Such terms are used repeatedly in local challenges, often to describe perfectly ordinary materials. All of these terms have been reduced to buzzwords by the Religious Right, and none has yet to be adequately defined. Still, they are powerful rhetorical devices, mobilizing grassroots followers of the Religious Right political movement to action.

"Censorship begins and should stay at home. I don't want the Board of Education to tell me or my child what we can and cannot read."

Community member commenting on controversy over Alvin Schwartz's *Scary Stories* series, Enfield, Connecticut

As a result, while many incidents included in this report do not reflect the direct involvement of national Religious Right groups, time and again the vague charges leveled by local challengers bore the rhetorical and ideological imprint of those organizations. In addition to the 18 percent of incidents in which these groups or individuals were involved, 12 percent of all challenges involved those buzzwords and claims, or were aimed at targets peculiar to Religious Right groups.

Several national groups, through sophisticated organizing and direct mail clout, have placed themselves at the forefront of the attack on public education. As noted, CEE is the most active censorship organization in the schools today. Simonds has written:

> *"Every day Christian children all across America are quietly sitting in their public school chairs while, unbeknownst to either the church, their parents, or the children themselves, they are being subjected to a subtle but systematic mind-altering and faith-destroying curriculum.... The kids get full-blown indoctrination in moral relativity and secular humanism.... Somehow this extraordinary and devastating destruction of our children's faith in God, their church and their pastors has not yet been realized by many pastors and parents. Children are torn between opposing world views, all taught quietly and very subtly in public schools. The result is a 33 percent drop in church Sunday school and youth service attendance, in just ten years (1980-1990). Shocking! Children attending public schools must be carefully trained by parents at home so they are aware of such brainwashing attempts and have strong faith.*

With these sentiments in mind, Simonds: teaches parents how to "change a curriculum"; teaches educators how to make "the Christian impact...felt in the classroom"; and advises pastors who involve themselves in public education to prepare to defend their beliefs "against the false arguments of 'neutrality' and 'the separation of church and state.'"

Other groups bent on imposing their ideological and sectarian agendas on public education include James Dobson's Focus on the Family, whose enormous radio and subscriber base gives the group's message considerable reach. Focus on the Family's activist newsletter regularly features case studies on individual challenges to public education, casting each as an example of Christian heroism in defense of children. One such case study during the period of this report heralded the accomplishments of a Texas activist who led a fight in her local district to reject an abstinence-based sex education curriculum in favor a Teen Aid, a fear-based abstinence-only curriculum that omits meaningful discussion of birth control and disease prevention issues. The activist's desire to deny other children in the district the information they may very well need to save their lives was particularly noteworthy because she home-schools her children! Focus on the Family included in its case study the phone number for Teen Aid, presumably so that other activists might model their efforts along similar lines.

"We must . . . avoid all controversial and objectionable material in a required curriculum."

Parent seeking to remove a literature anthology from an eighth-grade English class, Fairfax County, Virginia

Other groups active in similar attacks on the public schools include Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, whose materials turned up in challenges to educational reform across the nation; and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, particularly active in the drive to "take over" local school boards, and increasingly on the school censorship front.

These organizations and their supporters do not limit themselves to censorship and the broad-based challenges discussed above in their crusade to remake public education. Some of the other weapons in the Religious Right's arsenal include promoting "pre-censored" abstinence-only sexuality education curricula; lobbying for a school choice, or voucher, system; attempting, often through stealth means, to take over local school boards; and finally, using litigation in an attempt to blur the line between church and state. Increasingly this year, these groups have taken their battles to state legislatures, promoting a variety of legislation that would promote their ideological or sectarian goals in classrooms. Some of the activities are summarized below in order to paint a more complete picture of the Right's battle against public education.

1. The Campaign Against Comprehensive Sexuality Education

It is not surprising that challenges to comprehensive sexuality education curricula continue to rise, as these programs have been targeted for decades. In recent years, however, with the advent of the AIDS epidemic, Religious Right organizations have developed a new strategy for undermining sexuality curricula. As a substitute for comprehensive sex-ed, several "abstinence-only" curricula —

notably *Sex Respect* and the Teen Aid programs — have been developed and are being promoted by these groups. The programs, typically offered as "alternatives" to existing comprehensive sexuality education, omit the most fundamental information on contraception and disease prevention, perpetuate medical misinformation and promote sectarian beliefs. Moreover, they attempt to convince students to abstain by associating sexuality with fear and shame. *Sex Respect* has already been found to violate Louisiana law because it teaches religious beliefs and contains medically inaccurate information. In essence, *Sex Respect*, the Teen Aid curricula and the programs like them present only one option as viable: abstaining from all sexual activity until marriage.

This excerpt from a *Sex Respect* video is an example of the heavy-handed tactics of distortion common to these pre-censored, abstinence-only curricula. In this excerpt, a student poses a question to his teacher and receives a remarkable response:

Student: ***What if I want to have sex before I get married?***

Teacher: ***Well, I guess you just have to be prepared to die. And you'll probably take with you your spouse and one or more of your children.***

"Due to the language in it, we just can't have this kind of book being taught."

Superintendent supporting removal of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* from a middle school, Cookeville, Tennessee

Religious Right groups working together have in many cases been able to promote their fear-based abstinence-only programs successfully by claiming that comprehensive sexuality education programs do not discuss abstinence at all — that they simply teach children how to have sex. In truth, comprehensive sexuality education curricula not only teach but *emphasize* abstinence. In addition, they include information on contraception and disease prevention. In so doing, these more complete materials acknowledge a fundamental reality: that students will one day have need for information about disease prevention and birth control, not because it "encourages" sexual activity as Religious Right groups assert, but because it can save their lives and prevent unwanted pregnancies. These core issues are every bit as relevant to couples once they are married as before, a fact that abstinence-only curricula proponents invariably ignore.

When these two sides clash — those who would provide children with accurate and complete information and those who would censor potentially life-saving information — the resultant controversies often tear communities apart. In some cases, the controversy has landed in the courts; in others, it has continued for months and sometimes years, played out in angry, chaotic school board meetings and the letters-to-the-editor pages of local newspapers.

This struggle has played out in classic form in Hemet, California. In that tiny Southern California community, the local school board, dominated by Religious Right-aligned board members, debated the issue throughout the 1993-94 school year, and then finally moved to abandon a comprehensive sexuality education program in favor of *Sex Respect*, *Choosing the Best* and the Teen Aid curriculum. Ironically, in order to adopt the curricula, the board ignored the opinion of its own counsel that such a move would violate California law requiring

AIDS education. The board majority's avenue to circumventing the law was to suspend its own charter provisions requiring it to comply with state law, and then voting to adopt the program. Reaction to the decision was swift: acting on behalf of a group of local parents, People For the American Way and Planned Parenthood shortly thereafter brought suit challenging the curricula. After its own motion to dismiss the suit was rejected by a state judge, the majority on the school board voted to eliminate its sex education program altogether. In truth, if such a resolution were permitted to stand — and the board's action has not stopped the lawsuit — that most unfortunate result would seem to be in line with the Religious Right's long-held view that no sex education at all is better than accurate sex education.

The Hemet controversy has been repeated over and over again in communities across the country this past year — far and away the most active year for sex education controversies in the 13 years of People For the American Way's research. In the past year, Religious Right groups continued to press their efforts to replace comprehensive sex education with pre-censored materials:

"Even my mother got onto me about the removal of the book. She told me we needed to get that book back into the classroom."

School board chairman commenting on the community outrage over attempts to remove *Of Mice and Men*, Cookeville, Tennessee

• In Redding, California, the Rutherford Institute threatened the local school district with a lawsuit if it refused to remove its sex education curriculum. Rutherford claimed that the curriculum violated the First, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, as well as the privacy rights of students and parents. Along with its letter threatening a lawsuit, Rutherford lawyers proposed that the school district agree to a Rutherford-proposed "consent decree," giving the Religious Right group the authority to approve or disapprove sex education materials for the next three school years. The district rejected the proposal; no lawsuit has been filed.

• In Wharton, Texas, a group affiliated with Concerned Women for America, and using materials from Focus on the Family, took aim at a junior high sex education curriculum. The group, most of whose members had no children in local public schools, requested that the school board grant it the power to approve or disapprove all sex education instructional materials as well as all library materials on the subject. The group was successful in pressuring the school board to replace the curriculum with two fear-based curricula: *Choosing the Best* and Teen Aid.

2. The Campaign for Vouchers

Another growing controversy deals with proposals for private school vouchers. The term "vouchers," often referred to by proponents as "school choice," describes a way of funding private education with public tax money. Much as "creation science" and the theory of "Intelligent Design" are the rhetorical heirs to the battle to install Creationism in biology classrooms, "school choice" is the offspring of the early 1980s battle for "tuition tax credits" for parents wishing to send their children to sectarian schools at state expense.

Religious Right political groups continue to place vouchers among their highest priorities. To give their efforts broader populist appeal they have effected a daring and cynical strategy: portraying their interest in the issue as an effort to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged and minority children. For that reason, the pattern that has emerged in state legislative debates over the issue is for voucher proponents to push for urban pilot projects, sometimes with sectarian schools included, sometimes without. In communications with their own members, these groups are sometimes more straightforward about their real goals. CEE's Simonds, for example, portrays Christians who send their children to sectarian schools as victims: "Christians are taxed DOUBLE when they choose to send their children to private schools. Taxes for their education in public schools are automatically deducted — then private school tuition is charged — a double form of taxation." Simonds also argues that public schools are no place for Christian children, asserting that "[l]iberal feminists and homosexuals have immediate access to our children in their classrooms!"

"As parents and citizens we need to remove the offensive books from our schools, not in the name of censorship, but in the name of decency. And we should consider removing those elected officials and school administrators who support this type of 'literature.' In short, it is time to take back our schools."

Objector, seeking to remove Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* from classrooms, Round Rock, Texas

Less melodramatic rhetoric is employed in more public settings — "school choice" language, for example. In reality, however, vouchers afford no meaningful choice. The cost of private schooling far exceeds the amount a parent would receive from vouchers, leaving parents to make up the tuition discrepancy — a barrier that would be especially difficult for the very poor families "choice" proponents claim to want to help. In addition, private schools reject applicants on the basis of a host of factors, including social status, intelligence, educational achievement, and behavior. Furthermore, private schools lack the capability to teach all types of students. A 1988 federal survey found that only 30 percent offered programs for students with disabilities, compared to 90 percent of public schools. And less than 60 percent of private schools offered remedial reading, while only 43 percent offered remedial math.

This year, the voucher effort made significant strides in state legislatures. In two states, Wisconsin and Ohio, legislation was signed into law, in both cases with the support of Religious Right organizations. The Wisconsin bill expands the only existing voucher program to be found in any of the 50 states to include religious schools. First implemented in 1991, the program now provides tuition reimbursement to low-income families who wish to send their children to non-religious private schools. Despite the program's mixed results, Governor Tommy Thompson and other conservative leaders pressed this year to expand the program to include religious schools, and their plan was incorporated into this year's proposed state budget. Even before the Thompson legislative proposal, the conservative Institute for Justice had filed a federal lawsuit charging that the current exclusion of religious schools from the Milwaukee program was unconstitutional. In March, a federal court ruled in that case that applying the Milwaukee school voucher program to religious schools would violate the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state. However, Governor Thompson asserted that the ruling "will not deter our efforts" to expand the voucher system, and won passage of a bill to extend the program to religious schools. A lawsuit challenging the bill is imminent.

Meanwhile in Ohio, the state legislature passed and Republican Gov. George Voinovich signed a bill creating a pilot voucher system in the Cleveland schools. The program, adopted as part of a budget bill, includes use of state funds for religious education.

A number of other states debated voucher legislation in the past year, and the U.S. Congress is likely to follow suit within the next year: voucher legislation is a key plank of the Christian Coalition's so-called "Contract with the American Family." Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich promised that the Contract items, including vouchers, would get up-or-down votes in the House.

3. The Campaign to Take Over School Boards

"Would [the objectors] like all literature banned that was written by gay people? The list is long and illustrious. I certainly don't want such narrow-mindedness ever to decide what has any educational value."

Letter to the editor commenting on attempts to remove Mary Renault's *The Last of the Wine* from a high school class, Port Charlotte, Florida

School boards can serve as a much needed fire wall to censorship demands in the public schools. Challenges to educational materials often come before the school board for final disposition, and in most cases the majority of school board members act responsibly to evaluate the materials at issue on educational grounds. However, censorship advocates have come to realize that their cause will be more successful with allies sitting on those school boards. Thus, the last few years have witnessed a tremendous increase in attempts by groups such as Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE) and the Christian Coalition to elect school board members who share those organizations' goals for the public schools: state-coerced school prayer; fear-based, abstinence-only sexuality education; the teaching of Creationism; opposition to educational reform; and curriculum decisions based on religious or ideological grounds. Along these lines, the president of CEE claims to have assisted in the election of more than 22,740 "Christian/conservative" school board members across the country. Some of these candidates run "stealth" campaigns, not revealing their full agenda until they are elected; others campaign as "Christian conservatives" or "pro-family values" candidates.

A number of school districts have experienced enormous upheaval as a result of Religious Right-backed candidates gaining a majority on the school board. In Vista, California, a school board majority in place for a two-year period ending with the November 1994 elections rejected its sexuality education curriculum in favor of a pre-censored, abstinence-only program, and moved toward the teaching of creationism in the social studies curriculum. In Lake County, Florida, a Religious Right board majority eliminated a local Head Start program and adopted a policy that required students to be taught that American culture is "superior to all foreign or historic cultures." And in Round Rock, Texas, a Religious Right school board fired its school superintendent following his refusal to violate a state directive and permit loudspeaker prayer before football games. Each of these districts came to unwanted national prominence because of the controversies these school boards ignited.

The campaigns to elect such school board candidates rely on low voter participation for their success. Without increased participation in school board elections by mainstream parents and community members, it is likely that those

affiliated with or backed by Religious Right organizations will continue to gain majorities on school boards, providing a powerful base for their continued assault on public education.

The best proof of the power of committed mainstream activists came in these very districts. In all three of these high-profile instances, mainstream majorities during the 1994-95 school year rejected the Religious Right candidates and replaced them with moderate majorities. The elections stirred extraordinary voter turnout, and an outpouring of activism. In these districts, at least for now, mainstream parents have reclaimed their school districts from the Religious Right. These mainstream successes confirm the view long held by many Religious Right-watchers that while "movement" candidates can initially come to power through stealth tactics and other means, they are hard-pressed to win reelection once their true agenda is splayed before the voters.

"It is not censorship when you remove something hurtful."

School board member supporting efforts to remove a mural from an elementary school because it allegedly promoted racial stereotypes, Oak Park, Illinois

Despite the rejection of Religious Right efforts in these three communities, the movement continues to gain on school boards across the nation. This report demonstrates some of the impact of those efforts. Time and again this year, school board members brought challenges to ordinary materials citing typical Religious Right objections. Many such challenges were successful, even in instances where the mainstream held the majority.

4. Parental Rights Amendment

Over the years, one of the most effective barriers to censorship in the schools has been the establishment of and adherence to policies and procedures for handling challenges. As noted earlier, school districts that have no such policies, or that have policies but ignore them, are far more likely to remove materials. In a bold new initiative, this year, a number of Religious Right leaders have sought to arm challengers with a weapon designed to trump such policies. The weapon has traveled the country in the last year under a seemingly innocuous name: the Parental Rights Amendment (PRA).

The amendment owes its rapid spread to an organization called Of the People, based in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. The generic version of the PRA reads simply, "The right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." This superficially appealing language raises a number of questions regarding child abuse reporting and child labor laws, but in the education context, its supporters are clear about their intentions: they hope to secure veto power for individual parents over public school curricula. By adopting language that is intended to give parents absolute authority over what their children are taught, PRA-backers would greatly strengthen the hands of those who would censor schoolbooks, or seek to control curricula on ideological or sectarian grounds. Of the People claims that the amendment has been or will be introduced in 27 state legislatures this year. So far, reports have surfaced of its introduction in 19 states. It has been defeated on floor votes in two (North Dakota and Kansas) and is stalled in the others.

The Christian Coalition has adopted the "parental rights" cause and made such legislation part of its "Contract with the American Family." Federal legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in late June by Rep. Steve Largent (R-OK), a Religious Right favorite, as well as a number of other conservative Members of Congress, including Reps. Andrea Seastrand (R-CA) and Helen Chenoweth (R-ID).

According to Of the People, the initiative has been introduced in Arizona, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. Of the People also claims that some form of the initiative will be introduced shortly in Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

5. The Resurgent School Prayer Movement

With the legal and organizing assistance of prominent Religious Right groups, and a lot of press generated by the new conservative Congress and its "Contract With America," the school prayer movement, which had made a comeback across the nation during the 1993-94 school year, picked up even more momentum during 1994-95.

Among the groups leading the school-prayer movement are the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) and the Christian Coalition, two organizations founded by Pat Robertson. ACLJ's lead attorney is Jay Sekulow, who has said, "Our public schools began as ministries of the church; now it is time to return them to the Lord." The Christian Coalition's Executive Director, Ralph Reed, has referred to a so-called religious equality amendment aimed at restoring prayer to schools as the "crown jewel" of his "Contract With the American Family." Another key right-wing legal group in the fray is the Rutherford Institute, while groups such as Concerned Women for America, the Traditional Values Coalition and the American Family Association join in the grassroots organizing efforts. These groups use strong pro-prayer rhetoric, linking the lack of organized prayer in the schools to a host of social ills, and have mounted a campaign of misinformation to advance their grassroots and legislative agendas.

While pressure for state-coerced school prayer has continued at the local level on school board members and superintendents, since January 1995, when the 104th Congress convened, much of the focus has been national as well. While groups such as the ACLJ have used distorted interpretations of court rulings to pressure school districts into adopting policies at odds with the Constitution, Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition and the Reverend Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition are working with conservative lawmakers in hopes of passing a broad constitutional amendment providing for school prayer and other types of state-coerced religious expression in the public arena. In addition, state school prayer bills made progress in a number of state legislatures.

The clashes over prayer in the schools involve many of the same issues as attacks on library and classroom materials. In both cases, religious and ideological pressures are brought to bear on school systems, diverting them from their primary task of educating children. Often those who oppose school prayer, like those who support challenged books, are falsely accused of being anti-religious. In Mississippi, a Christian mother of six, with support from People For the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union, filed suit against her local school district, where prayer and Bible reading were being broadcast over the school public address system. She and her children were subjected to ridicule and harassment, and accused of being atheists, simply because they asked that their local public school district comply with the U.S. Constitution.

Mainstream clergy are attempting to refocus this debate, mounting an increasingly vocal effort to keep state-coerced prayer out of the schools. Their religious perspective is that government officials should not be editing or approving the content of prayers and that children should not be pressured to participate in religious observances at odds with their own faith.

"Are you all nuts? This board is sending the youth in this town into an educational slaughterhouse."

Recent high school graduate commenting on a proposal to teach Creationism in science classes, Merrimack, New Hampshire

FIGHTING BACK

Denying students the educational tools to think about and to deal with the complexity of today's society does them an extreme disservice. Perhaps the greater disservice, however, involves the message students are being sent about their own freedoms. As books and curricula are removed and restricted throughout the nation's schools, children lose the opportunity to learn important lessons. However, the one unfortunate lesson they do learn is that censorship is an appropriate response to controversial ideas.

In more than a decade of work with communities striving to strengthen their public schools, People For the American Way has developed a number of programs aimed at helping educators and citizens alike prevent, and that failing, defeat censorship attempts. People For operates a toll-free censorship hotline through which callers can receive a variety of technical and legal assistance, including *An Activist's Guide to Protecting the Freedom to Learn* — our citizen action guide to fighting censorship. People For the American Way has gone to court a number of times in the past several years, triumphing over censorship complaints in Hawkins County, Tennessee; Mobile, Alabama; and Woodland, California, among other important cases.

One lesson we have learned after years of reporting on the subject is that as the censors become more sophisticated, crossing all geographic, demographic and political boundaries, citizens and educators must respond in kind. Time and

again, parents and school officials express surprise when censorship arrives in their communities. It is best, then, that communities prepare for such challenges now, to ensure that they are organized and decisive in their responses.

Based on interviews with hundreds of educators and citizen groups who have successfully defeated censorship, People For the American Way recommends that school districts develop effective reconsideration policies for handling challenges. Years of experience demonstrate that such policies are the single most effective brake on censorship. Specifically, People For the American Way recommends that:

• Districts should develop and observe a clear written policy for addressing challenges to library and classroom materials. Make certain that all school administrators, school board members, teachers and librarians are aware of and observe the policy.

• The policy should state that the school system will not remove challenged materials pending review. Materials should be treated as "innocent until proven guilty."

• The policy should describe explicitly the various steps in the review procedure, the people responsible at each stage, key decision points and any appeal process.

"Your move to keep our community safe from homosexuality is ridiculous. All that you have done is tell a significant number of our high school students that you do not value or support them."

Parent opposing a school board proposal to ban from schools all materials or programs that "ha[ve] either the purpose or effect of encouraging or supporting homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative," Merrimack, New Hampshire

• The policy should encourage resolution of complaints at the lowest organizational level — first with the teacher or librarian, then with the principal, and so forth through the district hierarchy. The school board should be the last resort.

• The policy should require that formal, written complaints be filed to trigger the review process. Complainants should be encouraged to read the complete work and to address their concerns in the overall context of the school's *educational* goals.

• The policy should require that review committees have broad representation, including parents, teachers, school administrators and students, and that they focus their evaluation on the educational merit and quality of the challenged material.

In addition, school systems should publicize the criteria and procedures for adopting curricular materials and allow for parental involvement early in the process. Otherwise, parents who have questions may feel that their only recourse is to complain after the books are selected and in the schools.

Given the increasing reach of the forces arrayed against public education in America, it is also important that parents, educators and other Americans concerned about public education organize politically. As sad as it may seem, the national consensus on the importance of strong public schools is sagging under

the weight of the persistent challenges of Religious Right political groups. America's public schools need the active and involved support of all concerned if they are to survive the political challenges they face, and if they are to continue the thoughtful and needed reforms now underway.

A TEACHABLE MOMENT

The incidents detailed in this report tell of attempts to censor materials or in some other way impose a religious or ideological orthodoxy on the public schools. But many of the incidents also tell stories of parents and educators who effectively fought back, and who can serve as models for communities and school districts across the country. These heroes of public education recognized the extraordinary stakes posed by censorship battles in their communities, and taught their children three important lessons at an especially teachable moment. The lessons: standing up for principle, though sometimes unfashionable, is worthwhile; freedom of expression must not be compromised for reasons of political expedience; and, lastly, the democratic process requires informed and active citizen participation to achieve positive results.

• In Cookeville, Tennessee, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* was reinstated for use in a ninth-grade English class after angry parents, educators and community members protested the book's removal. Initially, the school superintendent, who claimed never to have read the American classic, violated school policy by ordering the book's removal following a single complaint.

• In Springfield, Missouri, an annual field trip to a local art museum was suddenly canceled by school officials who received a single complaint about paintings of nudes in the exhibit. Community reaction was swift and negative, and after several calls from outraged parents, officials reversed the decision.

• In College Station, Texas, when activists affiliated with the Eagle Forum challenged all four health textbooks approved for use in state schools by the state school board, local mainstream parents and educators responded with a campaign of their own. Had the school board bowed to all the activists' demands, the school district would have had no state-approved texts from which to choose. After intense controversy, the board approved three of the books for use.

• In Plano, Texas, school board members affiliated with the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America and Eagle Forum touched off a series of controversies over such issues as Creationism, sex education, and participation in "Take Our Daughters to Work Day." Mainstream parents responded to the string of incidents by organizing Keep Quality in Plano Schools. The group successfully fought off an effort to install the Creationist text *Of Pandas and People* in the schools, and then focused on defeating Religious Right school board incumbents and challengers in the 1995 elections. Their effort resulted in the re-establishment of a mainstream majority on the board.

These and other examples demonstrate that the keys to defeating challenges are vigilance and involvement. Educators must be prepared to defend their materials, and parents must be prepared to mobilize to protect the integrity of their children's education. Most important, the two should work together: when teachers or administrators are left to battle censorship groups on their own, the chances for the worst outcome increase dramatically. But when a community comes together and forms alliances that include parents, business leaders, clergy and educators, the censors are hard-pressed to prevail. This simple and most democratic of strategies is far and away the best safeguard.

STATE RANKING

1. California
2. Texas
3. Pennsylvania
4. Oregon
5. Georgia
5. Ohio
5. Washington
8. Michigan
9. Minnesota
10. Florida
11. New Hampshire
12. Iowa
13. Kansas
13. South Carolina
13. Wisconsin
16. Virginia
17. Arizona
17. Indiana
17. Missouri
17. New York
21. Massachusetts
21. Maryland
23. Colorado
24. Alabama
24. Alaska
24. Illinois
24. Nevada
24. Oklahoma
29. Arkansas
29. Connecticut
29. Kentucky
29. Maine
29. North Carolina
29. Rhode Island
29. Tennessee
36. Idaho
36. Louisiana
36. Mississippi
36. New Jersey
36. Utah
36. Wyoming
42. Delaware
42. Montana
42. North Dakota
42. Vermont
42. West Virginia
47. Nebraska
47. New Mexico
47. South Dakota

ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM TO LEARN

REGIONAL AND STATE BREAKDOWN 1994-1995

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM TO LEARN
REGIONAL AND STATE BREAKDOWNS
1994-1995

OPEN

STATE OVERVIEW

ALABAMA

In Alabama, the state board of education revised the new K-12 science curriculum in response to pressure from Eagle Forum and Christian Coalition members and other advocates of Creationism for guarantees that "no social agenda shall be promoted" in science classes. In Oxford, an elementary school principal objected to an art book containing a line drawing of a nude woman's torso. Rather than remove the book, the librarian was granted permission to add a bathing suit to the drawing.

INCIDENT: In Oxford, objections to a mythology book, available in a fourth- through sixth-grade library, for containing a line drawing of the nude torso of a woman. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: When the principal requested initially that the book be thrown away, and later that the offending page be torn out, the librarian requested that she be allowed to draw a bathing suit top on the figure. The principal agreed and the book is still on the shelf with the breasts of the figure covered.

INCIDENT: In Pell City, objections to a student wearing a Confederate flag shirt, in a middle school, for alleged violation of the school dress code. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School officials.

RESOLUTION: A lawsuit was filed on behalf of the student, for violation of his free speech rights.

INCIDENT: In Troy, objections to an article in *The Trojan Myths*, a high school newspaper, for references to alcohol consumption and nudity that were allegedly "inappropriate for the maturity level of the audience." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Publication Review Committee and Principal.

RESOLUTION: The principal sustained the Publication Review Committee's decision to reject the article. When the principal did not respond to a second appeal within the allotted amount of time, the students and advisor attempted to go to press. However, the printer said that the principal had instructed him not to print the paper. A story in the second issue that reported the censorship of the first issue was censored as well. Said one of the student editors, referring to the committee and principal, "They're approving stories on the football team and faculty members but anything that would cause students to think was marked out."

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As a result of these incidents, the author of the original article and the two editors started an underground newspaper called *The Student Voice*. Said a statement in the beginning of the first issue, "*The Voice* is the public forum that the *Myths* was intended to be."

INCIDENT: In Alabama, objections to *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold, available in elementary school library, for containing a scene in which adult characters drink beer. Fearing reprisal, the source requested that the name of the community be withheld. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The principal requested removal of the book after a parent complained. The librarian then moved the book to a "professional" shelf that limits access to teachers.

INCIDENT: In Alabama, the state board of education agreed to add the following statement to the new K-12 science curriculum: "Explanations of the origins of life and major groups of plants and animals, including humans, shall be treated as theory and not as fact. When attempting to apply scientific knowledge to world problems, no social agenda shall be promoted."

The statement was included to appease members of Eagle Forum, the Christian Coalition, and others advocating Creationism after they organized a campaign against an earlier draft of the curriculum. A letter from Eagle Forum to the state board of education asked them to reject the proposal because it advances "politically correct attitudes" and a "radical social agenda." Claiming that the proposal contained many derogatory references to religion, Eagle Forum asserted that "in no case should a child's faith be challenged in class."

ALASKA

STATE OVERVIEW

Anchorage saw challenges to Halloween decorations for allegedly promoting satanism and pagan worship. Student science fair projects also came under fire in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

INCIDENT: In Anchorage, a parent objected to Halloween decorations in a middle school, claiming that they promoted satanism and pagan worship. The objector also accused the district of failing to permit the display of Christian symbols on an equal basis.

Following the formal complaint, the Controversial Issues Review Committee referred the objector to a district policy already in place that permits the display

of "cultural and traditional" holiday decorations. The school board upheld the committee's decision that Halloween decorations comply with the guidelines of that policy.

INCIDENT: In Anchorage, objections to *Soup and Me* by Robert Newton Peck, read aloud by a teacher to a fourth-grade class, for allegedly containing sexist and offensive language that "promulgated sexual abusiveness." The objector specifically took issue with the section of the book where a little girl in the story bends over, exposing "where her underwear ought to be." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee was appointed to determine the content and appropriateness of the children's story. After reading and discussing the story, the committee informed the objector that they disagreed with her interpretation of the passage in the book and recommended to the school board that the book be retained. The school board upheld the committee's decision.

INCIDENT: In Anchorage, objections to a student's science fair project, at a state science fair for third- and fourth-grade students, for containing an animal fetus and pictures of human fetuses. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Science fair officials.

RESOLUTION: The topic for the student project was the fetal development of moose versus humans. A pregnant female moose had been found dead on a road and the fetus was displayed along with pictures of human fetuses from *A Child is Born* by Nilsson Lennart. "To avoid any unpleasant circumstances," science fair officials covered both the fetus and the pictures of human fetuses, claiming that the national science fair rules prohibited the showing of the fetus of any animal. Science fair officials plan to discuss this issue again, reviewing the rules of the national science fair and consulting with the officials who set the rules.

INCIDENT: In Fairbanks, objections to an anti-abortion science fair project, at an elementary school science fair, for containing pictures of aborted fetuses. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal and a school official.

RESOLUTION: The principal and a school official ordered that the project entitled *"Is Abortion Murder? Yes!"* be removed from the science fair to the principal's office. Although the student and her parents offered to cover up or remove a Right to Life brochure with pictures of aborted fetuses, the project was removed

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from public view in the school gymnasium and judged in the principal's office. According to a school official, "This is a topic that is not discussed at the elementary level...It's not appropriate." Judges awarded the project second-place.

INCIDENT: In Soldotna, objections to *Jumper* by Steven Gould, available in the district's high school libraries, for references to "rape" and "homosexuality" and its allegedly violent and profane content. The objector believed the book might make the reader "insecure towards people, such as in a shower in school or in the military." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A formal complaint was filed and the reconsideration committee recommended to the school board that the book be retained. The school board voted to accept the committee's recommendation and the book remains in high school libraries.

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STATE OVERVIEW

The Arizona state legislature defeated tuition voucher legislation that would have allowed parents to use public money to send their children to private schools. High school students in Tempe chose to cancel a production of the play *Sex Lives of Superheroes* rather than make changes ordered by the school board president in violation of policy. Religious Right-affiliated objectors effectively delayed the implementation of an abstinence-based health curriculum in Scottsdale. In Gilbert, an objector publicly challenged J.D. Salinger's classic *The Catcher in the Rye*, referring to the book as "one of the most disgusting...allowed on a school campus."

INCIDENT: In Chandler, objections to *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George, a Newbery Award-winning book being read in a multi-age (grades 3-5) class, on the grounds that it contains a scene in which a man forcibly kisses his wife. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: In response to parental complaints, the book was removed from the classroom and from the elementary school library. District officials decided it was not appropriate for younger students. Though many teachers and librarians wanted the book to remain available in district elementary libraries, the principals of the other elementary schools decided to voluntarily pull the book from library shelves temporarily and make it available only to teachers. According to a district official, at least one elementary school has since returned the book to the library, but the book is otherwise not in use.

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INCIDENT: In Gilbert, objections to *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, in use in a senior advanced placement English class, for "vulgar language." In a letter to the local newspaper the objector wrote that the book "is one of the most disgusting... allowed on a school campus." Invoking a new school policy disciplining students who use offensive language, the objector requested that either the book or the policy be removed, but said that he preferred that the book be removed.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The material is still in use. The objector made his request in a letter to the local newspaper, but never filed a formal complaint. School administrators responded in a later article, outlining the district's formal policy and arguing that there is a difference between abusive language directed at a person and profanity in a piece of literature. The objector's child read the alternate selection that was offered in the first place.

INCIDENT: In Phoenix, objections to *The Witch's Christmas* by Norman Bridwell, available in an elementary school library, on the grounds that the book "harms my family and other families that value the eternal significance of Christmas, by trying to put a tie between what is holy and glorious with things that represent evil." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent, who is a member of a fundamentalist Christian church that suggests that parents challenge "inappropriate" educational materials.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book and issued the objector a school library card so she can help select what her first-grade daughter can read. The school librarian, who has 25 years of experience teaching English, noted that she was completely taken aback by the challenge. "This is the most innocuous book!" she said.

INCIDENT: In Scottsdale, objections to a proposed abstinence-based sexuality/AIDS education curriculum, *Reducing the Risk*, on the grounds that it is "amoral" and "value-less," teaches students that "if you think it's OK to have sex, you should use a condom," and that it "promotes homosexuality" because suggested role-playing "does not exclude the possibility that persons of the same sex might be going out together." Rejection of curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Group called Parents Who Care, affiliated with Concerned Women for America and assisted by the American Center for Law and Justice.

RESOLUTION: The proposed abstinence-based curriculum was adopted by the school board, but some of the challenged material was modified. For example, wording in the curriculum was changed to increase emphasis on abstinence; certain chapters will be given to parents for use at home rather than in classrooms;

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references to items used for protection in certain sex acts will be deleted or changed; planned units on shopping for contraceptives and visiting family-planning clinics will be removed; and additional material on relationships, marriage, sexual harassment, and related topics will be included.

The curriculum was originally recommended by a task force convened by the school district. A member of the district's health advisory council noted that *Reducing the Risk* "has been judged as the most effective reality-based, comprehensive sexuality education curriculum" and complies with Arizona state law which mandates AIDS/HIV education. Several hundred people attended the public forum at which the Task Force introduced a draft of their recommendations. Parents Who Care and Concerned Women for America handed out pamphlets and displayed posters containing excerpts from *Reducing the Risk*, most of which were not material the Task Force proposed to use. An attorney with Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice threatened to sue both the school district and one of the community members active in promoting the proposed curriculum; this threat was not carried out. However, in the face of extreme pressure, the Task Force did agree to modify the curriculum and the school board accepted the modifications.

Parents Who Care, which has since changed its name to Parents Do Care, is still trying to have the entire curriculum replaced by an abstinence-only curriculum. Mobilizing against those efforts is, among others, a group called Arizona Citizens Project, whose goal is "to fight sectarian and other extremists."

According to the Arizona Citizens Project, a nurse, who was invited to participate in teacher training for the new program, opposed the curriculum and disrupted the training to such an extent that no teachers were willing to participate. Thus the implementation of the curriculum has been delayed by the unavailability of teachers to teach it.

INCIDENT: In Tempe, objections to *Sex Lives of Superheroes* by Stephen Gregg, a play to be performed by high school students, for references to virginity, homosexuality, sex with superheroes, and interplanetary sex. The objector told students to delete portions of the play or to cancel it altogether.

OBJECTOR: School board president, faculty member, community member.

RESOLUTION: *Sex Lives of Superheroes*, a one-act play to be performed with two other one-act plays, had been selected by drama students and their teacher, and had been approved by the high school principal. The controversy began when an anonymous community member mailed a copy of the show's playbill to a school board member. A warning on the playbill stated, "It is not our intention to offend anyone....If you feel that you may be offended by tonight's performance, we will be happy to refund the price of your ticket." In response, the board president, along with a board member, attended a dress rehearsal of *Sex Lives of*

Superheroes. One day before opening night, the board president ordered the cast members to omit a monologue from *Sex Lives of Superheroes* or cancel the performance altogether. Rather than submit to the changes, the students chose to cancel the production. The objector admitted that he violated school board policy by demanding that changes be made in the play without seeking board approval; still, at a special hearing to discuss the issue, the school board voted 3-1 to ratify his decision.

At that hearing, many parents, students, and community members expressed disappointment with the board president's actions. "He deprived me of the opportunity to judge the plays for myself," said one parent, who described the president's actions as a "clear violation of freedoms."

INCIDENT: In Tucson, objections to *Cauldron of Witches* by Clifford Alderman, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly violent content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the library, determining that it is a scholarly work containing information on witchcraft in various countries.

INCIDENT: In Tucson, objections to *Karen Kepplewhite Is the World's Best Kisser* by Eve Bunting, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly promoting promiscuity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book, finding it to be a realistic portrayal of young people and their feelings.

INCIDENT: In Tucson, objections to an article on witches, in the high school student newspaper, *Jaguar Prints*, for allegedly needing to be more "balanced." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal and other school district officials.

RESOLUTION: District officials did not allow the article to be printed in the student newspaper. According to a school official, the article on witches did not contain enough factual information. The student was directed to rewrite the article and discuss more negative aspects of witchery, but she refused. Upset by the

ARIZONA

decision, a student journalist said, "I felt that it was really unfair to us and to other students." A school official commented, "Some things are not appropriate for a student newsletter."

INCIDENT: In Arizona, Governor Fife Symington signed into law a number of bills designed to both limit state control over education standards and to change curriculum requirements. Under the new laws, courses on environmentalism, AIDS education and drug abuse will be removed from the mandatory curriculum requirements, though these courses had never received state funding. School districts are also permitted to charge fees for many optional classes and extracurricular activities. Another law relaxes requirements for home-school students. The new laws will go into effect at the beginning of the 1995-96 school year.

INCIDENT: In Arizona, tuition voucher legislation has been introduced that would allow parents to use public school funds to send their children to both nonsectarian and religious private schools. The proposal, which has been defeated this session but is expected to be reintroduced in some form next session, would have created vouchers worth one half of the per-child state spending on public schools. The legislation is seen by opponents as a violation of the separation of church and state.

ARKANSAS

STATE OVERVIEW

In a dramatic display of censorship, a Greer's Ferry teacher tore *Fourth-Graders Don't Believe in Witches* to pieces in front of her class, in support of the principal's objection to the book for references to witches. In response to a student's objection to "bad words" in Judy Blume's *Blubber*, a Kingston principal personally edited the library copy with white-out.

INCIDENT: In Greer's Ferry, objections to *Fourth-Graders Don't Believe in Witches* by Terri Fields, in use in a fourth-grade class as part of the Reading Is Fundamental recreational reading program, for discussing witches. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal and teacher.

RESOLUTION: The principal objected to the story and instructed the teacher to remove it. The teacher then destroyed the book in front of the students by tearing it to pieces. An irate parent notified the superintendent who recommended and initiated the adoption of a policy to subject challenged materials to formal review by a reconsideration committee. The Reading Is Fundamental program continues in use, but without *Fourth-Graders Don't Believe in Witches*.

ARKANSAS

INCIDENT: In Jacksonville, objections to *Excalibur,* a film in use in a twelfth-grade British literature class, for partial nudity and references to the occult. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The principal accepted a review committee's recommendation that the video be removed. Wrote one administrator, "This title will no longer be used because of its R-rating and historical fallacy." *Excalibur* is based on the legendary tale of King Arthur.

INCIDENT: In Kingston, objections to *Blubber* by Judy Blume, available in a K-12 library, for containing "bad words."

OBJECTOR: Student and principal.

RESOLUTION: The objector brought the "bad words" to the attention of the school principal without making a specific request. After keeping the book on his desk for several weeks, the principal returned it to the student with the "bad words" whited out. The book remains in the school library.

INCIDENT: In Kingston, a challenge to *Cujo* by Stephen King, available in an elementary through high school library, for "objectionable material."

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The librarian removed the book from the library shelf in December pending the formulation of a reconsideration policy, and as of the end of the school year it remains off the shelf.

The objector originally made a verbal complaint to the superintendent, who asked the librarian to look at the book and see what she thought. The librarian noted that the book, purchased only recently for the library, contains several "graphic" passages. After discovering that the school has no reconsideration policy, she decided to remove the book from the library temporarily until a policy is in place. At that time, the objector will be contacted to see whether she wants to make a formal request for removal.

CALIFORNIA

STATE OVERVIEW

Once again, California led the nation in attacks on the freedom to learn, with 44 in the 1994-95 school year. Challenged materials included library and classroom books, sex education and AIDS education curricula and teachers' workshops, Goals 2000, and the singing of "Dixie." *The Giver* by Lois Lowry was challenged in San Dimas, Palm Springs, and Elk Grove, in two cases with the assistance of the Rutherford Institute. Other sources of controversy were the teaching of Creationism, prayer at a baccalaureate ceremony, and the firing of a teacher after the showing of films containing profanity. Even *Sesame Street*'s Bert and Ernie came under fire for allegedly promoting homosexuality.

INCIDENT: In Alturas, objections to *Summer of My German Soldier* by Bette Greene, in use in a seventh-grade English class, for objectionable language, specifically the use of "goddamn" six times throughout the novel. Transfer of the book to high school level curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee found the book appropriate for middle school students. The committee also decided that teachers should inform students about controversial aspects of novels used in class, and encourage parents to review curriculum book lists. A teacher commented that this method will be more effective for both the teacher and student, "allowing us to focus on the educational value of the book."

INCIDENT: In Antelope, an untenured first-year teacher was released from his contract after he showed his junior high school students films containing profanity and did not obtain parental permission.

The complaint in this case came from a school board member who is also a minister and a parent of a junior-high student. The teacher had shown his eighth-grade English classes the films *Dead Poets Society* and *Poetic Justice*, and in his role as basketball coach, had shown his team *Above the Rim* and *Speed*. Although the principal issued a written reprimand and a plan for remediation to the teacher, and despite a parents' petition to the school board and other demonstrations in support of the teacher, the board voted 3-2 to dismiss him. A local paper editorialized against the firing, calling it "as dumb as it is excessive."

INCIDENT: In Bakersfield, objections to *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady* by Selina Hastings, for "profane words" and for "taking God's name...other than respectfully." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: A review committee voted 6-2 to retain the book, with the two dissenters voting to move it to the middle school library. The committee noted in its decision that the book is kept in the Folklore/Fairy Tale section of the library, rather than in Easy Reading, which is for younger students. The book is also on the California State Department of Education recommended reading list and contains award-winning illustrations. Furthermore, committee members decided that the two references to God, when taken in context, are "within perceived acceptable moral boundaries" of the community.

The objectors appealed to the school board and threatened a lawsuit. The board neither accepted nor rejected the committee's motion to retain the book. One board member made a motion to move the book to the middle school library; it was not seconded. The objectors then met with the superintendent and agreed not to sue, expressing their willingness to work with the school district. The book remains on the library shelf.

INCIDENT: In Ceres, objections to *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein, available in an elementary and middle school library, for allegedly having death as its theme and containing satanic implications. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to retain the popular children's book. While the committee applauded the objector's involvement in her child's education, its members said they could not justify removing the book from the library and denying other children in the school access to it. One committee member stated, "Personally and professionally, I do not want to see anything yanked from the library. That just leaves the door wide open." The objector subsequently visited the school library, reviewed the selection of books there and made an extensive list of books she found offensive that she did not want her son to read. The school cooperated with her wishes and agreed not to lend any of the books on the list to her son.

INCIDENT: In Clovis, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, on an approved reading list for an elective American literature class for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students, because it contains "immorality, profanity and perversion...and is inappropriate for minors." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following an appeal, the school board upheld a review committee's unanimous decision to retain the book in the curriculum. In a letter to the objector, the review committee said that they voted to retain the book because it deals with issues including "family support,...perseverance, tolerance, under-

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standing and education." A parent supporting continued use of the book and critical of efforts to remove it commented, "A parent has a right to advocate for their own child. What they don't have a right to do is ban."

According to the associate superintendent, the challenge to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was only the second complaint in 30 years to go all the way to the school board. The first was a complaint lodged last year by the same objector to *Hatter Fox* by Marilyn Harris. *Hatter Fox* was not removed.

INCIDENT: In Elk Grove, objections to *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh, in use in third-grade classes, for dialogue referring to Native Americans as "heathen" and "savages." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent accepted a review committee's recommendation that the Newbery award-winning book be removed from the required reading list. Teachers may still use the book in class as long as specific directions are followed, including teaching that "certain historical references in the text are inappropriate and unacceptable ways for people to interact with each other."

INCIDENT: In Elk Grove, objections to *The Giver* by Lois Lowry; *Caleb's Brother* by James Baldwin; *The Loser* by Sam Keith; *Harrison Bergeron* by Kurt Vonnegut Jr.; and various classroom projects, assigned to a seventh-grade class, for allegedly containing "negative situations" that conflict with "personal moral convictions." One objector claimed that the aim of the materials was to "brainwash" students. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents with assistance from the Rutherford Institute.

RESOLUTION: After requesting that their daughter be excused from classroom readings of *The Giver*, the objectors failed to follow through on efforts to contact the teacher or meet with the principal to discuss their concerns about reading materials and classroom assignments. Instead they filed a formal complaint with the district with the assistance of the Rutherford Institute, suggesting that the selected assignments, which were state-adopted and -approved, were designed to "invade family privacy," inflict emotional distress, and "socially engineer" young children. The teachers were shocked to learn of the accusations lodged against their carefully constructed lesson plans, saying of one assignment, "The question doesn't brainwash her at all. Quite simply, she was asked if she could identify what decision was troubling the main character." While the objectors felt that *The Giver*, a Newbery Medal-winning novel, "has no academic value in educating children," the district's curriculum review committee found the book thought-provoking and beneficial to reading comprehension and writing skills. After a unanimous vote to retain *The Giver*, along with the other challenged materials, one trustee said, "The point of the story was missed by the family, or they didn't

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read the whole book. There's a lot of irony...It gets 12- and 13-year-olds to evaluate their values and reaffirm the values they hold."

INCIDENT: In Fallbrook, objections to the health education curriculum in use in the ninth grade, for mentioning contraception and reproductive rights and for not being abstinence-only. Replacement with *Sexuality, Commitment and Family*, a fear-based, abstinence-only curriculum published by Teen Aid, Inc., requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member and parent health education advisory group members.

RESOLUTION: Following two years of objections to the health curriculum, the parent health education advisory group that reviews all proposed health curricula recommended *Sexuality, Commitment and Family* for use, and the board adopted it. The advisory group added a 30-minute unit on contraception for only those students whose parents "opt in." According to one educator, the decision was made secretly and quietly and because of a small conservative minority. No teachers were involved in the process and in fact did not know about the new curriculum until a week before the sex education unit was to begin. Teachers were also required to show "But Is It Safe?" a video by the Religious Right group Focus on the Family, purportedly to meet state requirements for HIV/AIDS education.

INCIDENT: In Galt, objections to a proposed eleventh- and twelfth-grade United States history elective, "History Through Hollywood," allegedly for being not educational. Rejection of course requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: Though the course had been approved by the curriculum committee, the principal and vice-principal, and the district superintendent, three out of five school board members voted against the course, and it therefore was not approved.

The teacher who proposed the class, who has been recognized for her outstanding teaching, noted that although the curriculum was opposed on the grounds that it was not educational, the objectors never discussed the content of the course in their deliberations. What was really at issue, according to the teacher, was the R-rating of course material. The president of the school board objected to the course because of its use of R-rated films in the classroom, particularly since "[k]ids can watch videos at home."

Earlier in the year, a member of the school board had called for a moratorium on all R-rated films in the school district; the policy was revised in the spring of 1995

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to require parental permission for films rated R and PG-13, and to provide for review and editing of such films by the principal or designee. The proposal for "History Through Hollywood" fully complied with this policy. However, as the teacher pointed out, the policy is "pointless if the board will not approve any courses with R-rated films. They merely circumvent the policy."

The curriculum proposal stated that the "user-friendly medium" of film would help reach at-risk students and students with special needs such as reading and writing disabilities. The course would "reemphasize and reinforce other course offerings in social studies" as it explores historical events related to each film and requires students to think critically, work both individually and in groups, do research and writing, and work through history texts.

While the course is expected to be resubmitted next year, it was not available to students during 1994-95.

INCIDENT: In Hemet, the school board voted to eliminate all sexuality education from the curriculum after being sued for adopting the fear-based, abstinence only materials *Sex Respect, Teen Aid,* and *Choosing the Best. Sex Respect,* which was already in use in the district and the subject of much controversy, had been formally adopted by the board along with the other materials despite advice from the board's own attorney that *Sex Respect* did not comply with all requirements of California law. The lawsuit challenging the use of these materials was filed by parents in the community, with the assistance of People For the American Way and Planned Parenthood, following months of debate and unsuccessful efforts by parents and teachers to persuade the board to follow state requirements and include thorough and accurate information in the curriculum. In voting to adopt the challenged materials, the board not only ignored the advice of its legal counsel, but suspended a number of its own regulations, including one requiring that it comply with California law.

The board's vote to eliminate sex education altogether came after the court rejected the school district's attempts to have the lawsuit dismissed. In its resolution eliminating sex education, the board claimed that it had "encountered difficulty" in obtaining noncontroversial sex education materials that complied with applicable legal requirements.

INCIDENT: In Hemet, a teacher assigned a research project in a ninth-grade general science class in which students were provided with approved science textbooks and Creationist materials published by the Institute for Creation Research. The assignment consisted of three days of library research, two days of watching videos, one day for students to debate the pros and cons of evolution, and one day for the teacher to present his views on the best evidence for and against evolution. The students were to include a rationale for their "position" in a summary paragraph with their final reports.

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After reviewing the materials used in the lesson, the parents noted that some of the resources contained Biblical references and direct scriptural quotes and filed a formal complaint saying, "[Y]ou cannot use non-science, in this case a form of anti-science, to debate science." The parents requested "a district-wide policy and mechanisms to prevent Creationism...from being presented in a science class as an alternative to evolution and core scientific concepts."

In response to the complaint, the principal said that though some "of the sources do contain references to Creationism and biblical passages" Hemet was "not teaching Creationism." The references will be removed, but the lesson will be taught again next year. As this report went to press the parents were appealing the principal's decision to the district level.

A similar lesson, using the pro-Creationist "science" textbook, *Of Pandas and People* by Dean Kenyon, has been in use in an eighth-grade science class as well. The parents have been denied access to the full list of materials used and have recently filed a complaint about this lesson.

INCIDENT: In Lake Tahoe, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, on a ninth-grade summer reading list for Honors English, for profanity and sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: While no formal complaint was filed, the objector went to the superintendent who then spoke to the principal. The principal instructed the teacher to take the book off the required reading list and place it on the recommended reading list. Several parents were disturbed by what they perceived as an act of censorship and met with the school board to express their concern. The book remains stricken from the required reading list.

INCIDENT: In Lincoln, objections to *We All Fall Down* by Robert Cormier, available in a kindergarten through eighth-grade library, for allegedly glorifying alcoholism and violence, containing a rape scene, and profanity. Restriction to seventh grade and older requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board pulled the book from grades kindergarten through eight, overturning a review committee's decision to restrict access of the book to seventh grade and older. The board decided to remove the book because kindergarten through eighth-grade are all housed in the same building. Said one board member, "Certainly there may be some 11- or 12-year-olds who do not find it offensive, but on the whole, we felt it was best left in the high school."

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The objector complained after the teacher read the book aloud in a sixth-grade classroom, eliminating the profanity as she read. The teacher agreed to stop reading it, but the objector filed a complaint asking for the restriction of the book because she did not want it in other elementary school classrooms. In an interview with a local paper, the book's author said that though he was sympathetic with parents who want to protect their children, he disagrees with the objector "when she tries to tell other parents what to do."

INCIDENT: In Long Beach, objections to *Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare, in use in a fifth-grade reading class, and *Indian in the Cupboard* and *Return of the Indian* by Lynne Reid Banks, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly presenting racial stereotypes and being demeaning to Native Americans. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Members of the Native American community.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld the review committee's recommendation to retain all three books. *Sign of the Beaver* was retained as part of the curriculum on the grounds that it made a positive educational impact on students. *Indian in the Cupboard* and *Return of the Indian* were retained in the library collection because the books contain fantasy, not history. The committee also recommended that a letter be drafted to the books' publishers, pointing out the racial stereotypes, and a discussion guide be developed to supplement the books in class, focused on cultural issues and insensitivities.

INCIDENT: In Loomis, objections to *The Good Doctor*, a play written by Neil Simon, to be performed by an advanced drama class for high school juniors and seniors, for allegedly being "immoral" and "advancing adultery." Editing requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent and principal.

RESOLUTION: Upon hearing of the complaint, the teacher removed the objector's son from one of the play's vignettes and cut one scene. But when she refused to edit another, the principal said that he agreed with the parent and would not allow the production to be performed for the public because it contained sexual innuendo. Despite the fact that the drama teacher is a 24-year veteran of the school system, she was forced to produce an in-class version of the play, and students' parents were forced to take off work to see the performance.

INCIDENT: In Moreno Valley, students and school employees planned a prayer at a voluntary high school baccalaureate the night before graduation. The invoca-

tion by the principal included the reading of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. A 1992 Supreme Court decision prohibits school-sponsored prayer at graduations. "I respect the law and I understand the court decisions," the principal told reporters. But he indicated that the community wanted a prayerful baccalaureate. "We say the Pledge of Allegiance every day here," he said. "It has the line, 'under God.' We've never had a complaint about that." Approximately 500 people attended the ceremony, including half the senior class.

INCIDENT: In Newark, objections to Goals 2000 and outcome based education for allegedly "dumbing down" the curriculum. A group of parents sponsored a speech by Pennsylvania-based anti-Goals 2000 activist Anita Hoge and distributed fliers on doorsteps and windshields advertising the event. They also requested that the school district send a flier home with each student; the district refused. In a letter published in a local newspaper, one parent stated that Goals 2000 and outcome based education are antithetical to "traditional academic-oriented education" and consist of "touchy, feel-good groupthink" which puts control of education in the hands of the state rather than parents.

OBJECTOR: Parents and Anita Hoge.

RESOLUTION: Approximately 250 people turned out for the Hoge speech, though one school official estimates that between one-third and one-half of those present were not opposed to Goals 2000. Hoge claimed that current educational reforms are designed to turn children into "perfect products for the feds to exploit in the new global economy." A school board member commented that complaints about Goals 2000 are more properly addressed to the state; a district official pointed out that the programs that are being criticized are not even in place in their schools. "We do not have a program called outcome based education," she said. "There are components of outcome based education that are done probably in every school district."

In a letter to the newspaper, one parent who attended Hoge's speech asked, "Does anyone honestly believe all educators would buy into this system that Hoge suggests is lurking around the corner? Come on, let's give one of the hardest working professions in America some credit." She also noted, "I am curious to know who [Hoge's] financial backers are."

INCIDENT: In Orange, objections to ENABL (Education Now and Babies Later), an optional, after-school sex education curriculum for eighth-graders, for not being abstinence-only. Replacement with *Choices*, an abstinence-only curriculum in use in ninth-grade health classes, requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member.

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RESOLUTION: After a review of sex education programs, the school board voted to replace ENABL with *Choices* at the eighth-grade level. Since both curricula had been adopted by the curriculum committee, the board bypassed that committee in its decision to retain only *Choices* and to move it to the eighth grade. In a related decision, the board also voted to implement *Choices* during rather than after school, as is done in the ninth grade.

INCIDENT: In Orange County, objections to two sex education videos, "What About Sex? Teens Speak Out About Parents, Peers & Personal Responsibility" and "CBS Schoolbreak Special: Love in the Dark Ages," proposed for seventh- through twelfth-grade classroom viewing, on the grounds that they allegedly do not sufficiently stress abstinence. Rejection requested.

OBJECTOR: Board member, community members.

RESOLUTION: The videos were approved for use. Some members of the board had concerns about the educational quality of the videos, but most had no concerns about whether they sufficiently stressed abstinence. One board member said she felt that the videos are quite appropriate, that they are "trying to teach responsibility" and that they do teach students "how to say no."

INCIDENT: In Palm Springs, objections to *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, in use in a fourth-grade reading class, for inappropriate subject matter. Removal from all district elementary school libraries and classrooms requested.

OBJECTOR: Library clerk and principal.

RESOLUTION: The school board upheld the assistant superintendent's decision to remove *The Giver*, a 1994 Newbery Award winner, from all district elementary school libraries and to move it to middle school and high school libraries. A review committee recommended retaining the book in all libraries, but not allowing teachers to read it aloud in class or include the book as required reading.

After reading aloud to students from *The Giver*, a teacher had questioned the appropriateness of the material and consulted with the library clerk. Subsequently, the library clerk gave the book to the principal to read, who then requested that the library clerk file a formal request for removal of the book.

Librarians in the school district have protested the school board's decision to remove the book from district libraries and have recommended that the book be retained in all district elementary libraries. In a letter to the assistant superintendent, a protestor stated, "Choice is a theme of the book, but it is also a fundamental right guaranteed by our Constitution. These choices must be guarded zealously and if we err, it must be on the side of choice, not on the side of caution or at the cost of freedom of choice."

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INCIDENT: In Poway, objections to "Entertainment of the Senses" a poem by W.H. Auden, available in a high school library, for allegedly having an explicit sexual nature. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted to retain the poem in the library. Said a member, "It was apparent to the committee that the parent failed to understand the poem as a satire."

INCIDENT: In Poway, objections to *Seventeen* magazine, available in a middle school library, for being "inappropriate" for middle school readers. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee elected to remove the popular magazine from middle school library shelves, making it available only to high school students. The librarian, a 20-year veteran of the school district, said, "We've carried that magazine for years and years and never had a problem with it. The kids still ask for it."

INCIDENT: In Rancho Cordova, objections to *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam, available in an elementary school library, on the grounds that it is "evil." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a verbal complaint by the objector to the school principal, the librarian determined that the book should not be checked out to students under the age of eight, stating that it might not be appropriate for younger children.

INCIDENT: In Redding, objections to the high school sex education curriculum, for allegedly violating the first, fourth, and fourteenth amendments, the privacy rights of students and parents, and the California Education Code, which mandates the teaching of abstinence. Lawsuit threatened; consent decree proposed that would subject sex education curriculum to review by the Rutherford Institute.

OBJECTOR: The Rutherford Institute.

RESOLUTION: The school district responded to the objector's threats by stating that the sex education curriculum was in full compliance with the law. No further action was taken.

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In its letter of complaint, the objector cited various exercises and materials, arguing that they do not emphasize abstinence. The objector enclosed with the letter of complaint a proposed "Consent Decree" and requested that the district agree to the terms of the decree, including: The district would send formal apologies to the parents of students who have been taught sex education in the past school year, and the letters would have to acknowledge the violation of the Constitution and California law; copies of the letters would be placed in the permanent files of any teachers or principals who participated in the teaching of sex education that year; district educators would enter into specific agreement with the Rutherford Institute as to what materials would be used to teach sex education for the next three years; all teachers and staff would participate in "sensitivity training" on parents' and students' rights conducted by someone chosen by the Rutherford Institute.

INCIDENT: In Rocklin, a school board ignored the recommendation of its 26-member committee appointed to develop course guidelines for a tenth-grade Family Life/HIV education class and adopted the report of the minority which, in contrast, recommended the adoption of the pre-censored abstinence-only textbook *Reasonable Reasons to Wait* as the primary resource for the course. In addition to the implementation of a so-called "values-based" sexuality education program, the report of the minority called for strict limitations on the materials and resources teachers would be allowed to use to supplement the text. Additional materials were proposed to satisfy the legal requirement that information on HIV and AIDS be included. These "factual, substantiated" resources included publications with copyright dates as old as 1980 and came under the proposed heading "Health Risks For Homosexuals." The "traditional family values" approach embraced by the board limited its discussion of homosexuality exclusively to the "disproportionate health risks unique to homosexuals" and, unlike the committee's recommendation, did not make room for discussion of the similarities and differences between heterosexual and homosexual relationships or the "unacceptable and illegal" slurs, harassment and violence frequently experienced by people who are or are perceived to be gay.

Many parents felt the school board had made a grave mistake adopting the minority report's recommendation, and more than 300 parents attended a meeting to protest the board's decision. An administrative complaint signed by more than 100 parents was filed challenging both the substance of the board's decision and the procedures by which that decision was reached. Ultimately, the school board accepted a review committee's recommendation to remove *Reasonable Reasons to Wait* from the curriculum on the grounds that it contained 151 grammatical errors and misleading and inaccurate information, replaced it with *Facts and Reasons*, which one parent described as a "drier and more politically correct version of the same propaganda." The board also added materials to the course list so that teachers would have more flexibility in their selection.

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INCIDENT: In San Diego, objections to *First Date* by R.L. Stine, available in a middle school library, for containing "no authentic safety message." The objector felt that use of the book might result in "increased violence," students viewing "authority figures [as] a farce," "date rape," and "murder on [the] first date." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent accepted the review committee's recommendation that the book be retained in all libraries. After reading and discussing the book, the committee members felt that the specific objections of the parent were not accurate. The objector admitted that he had not read the entire book.

INCIDENT: In San Dimas, objections to the Newbery Award-winning novel *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, in use in seventh-grade classes, for discussion of death and sexuality. Citing a book jacket summary that says that the story is told with "deceptive simplicity," the objectors said that they did not want any form of "deception" read or taught to their child. The objectors also claimed that the book was "indoctrination, brainwashing and desensitizing children in our world today." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents receiving assistance from the Rutherford Institute.

RESOLUTION: The controversy started when a small group of parents requested at a school board meeting that the novel be pulled. Though only one of five members had read the book, the board voted to pull the book immediately in violation of district policy. After teachers and community members protested, the board reversed itself and reinstated the novel pending committee review. Said one board member opposing censorship of the book, "First you ban a book, then you burn it. I don't want to see that happen." The board later upheld a review committee's recommendation to restrict the book to seventh-grade and higher.

The objectors sought legal assistance from the Rutherford Institute, whose lawyers communicated with the district, but filed no suit. The objectors had previously worked with Eagle Forum in filing objections to the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS).

INCIDENT: In San Dimas, objections to *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by Christopher and James Lincoln Collier, in use in an eighth-grade English class, for portraying a child questioning his parents' moral values and portraying "Americans as barbaric, unfeeling and almost inhuman." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A board decision was pending as this report went to press. A teacher defended the book and commented that her students responded enthusiastically to the book about the American Revolution. "It makes the war more than just facts and figures on a piece of paper," she said.

INCIDENT: In San Jose, objections to *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor, in use in a seventh-grade language arts class and available in the school library, for allegedly being "steeped with heavy racially derogatory depiction of the African American character." The objectors argued that the depiction of the book's black and white characters would create a "lowered self-esteem in African American children" and a "feeling of guilt in white children." They asserted that black students "won't be able to disassociate" themselves from the portrayal of the black character while "a white child on the other hand will most probably identify with [the white character] and assume a more patronizing affection for [the black character] along with some feelings of superiority." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: African American Parents Coalition.

RESOLUTION: After a six-month battle, the school board upheld, by a 4-1 vote, the superintendent's decision to retain the book in all school libraries, but to remove it from the seventh-grade core reading list and place it on the eighth-grade extended reading list. The superintendent strongly disagreed with the objectors' interpretation of the book, saying, "We did not want to censor the material...I think it has a very critical lesson that could be taught. It could be used very positively." Members of the African American Parents Coalition had appealed the review committee's recommendation to the school board in the hope of having *The Cay* removed entirely from the middle school curriculum. One of the Coalition's members stated: "We have to be vigilant and not allow ourselves to be used and martyred in white literature as it attempts to move some of its readers to a greater humanity." Theodore Taylor, the African American author of the book, responded in an acerbic essay to the controversy surrounding his 1969 award-winning novel, lambasting the administration's "harmful and less than courageous retreat" from the book and the "shameful" and "frightening" reaction of the parents opposed to it. He indicated that the point of his book, which was written to foster racial harmony, was lost on the objecting parents.

INCIDENT: In Santa Ana, objections to *La Cocina de Noche*, a Spanish translation of *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, available in an elementary school library, for containing an illustration of a naked boy. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: A formal complaint was submitted by the objector. The review process was underway as this report went to press.

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INCIDENT: In Santa Cruz, objections to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, in use in ninth-grade and tenth-grade English, for the use of the word "nigger" in both texts "and other derogatory names that reflect a negative portrayal of African Americans." One objector noted that "nigger" was used 114 times in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Request for removal of both books from the Core Literature List and transfer to the high school library.

OBJECTOR: Parents and student.

RESOLUTION: The Board of Education voted 6-1 to retain the books on the Core Literature List, and approved recommendations from the Core Literature Ad Hoc Committee to expand diversity training for teaching staff, emphasize literature in its historical context, and address racism within the novels and society. The Core Literature Ad Hoc Committee also recommended an annual review of core literature, and that teachers discuss controversial aspects of these novels with students, integrating works by authors who represent differing viewpoints and varied interpretations of the novels.

The director of curriculum and assistant superintendent of instruction stated, "If these books are taught so as to put African American students at risk, then there is something wrong with how these books are taught." They also asserted that "to remove these books from the core list, books that have been chosen because of their literary value in raising social, political, and moral issues, is to abandon a responsibility that only public education has inherited."

INCIDENT: In Santa Monica, objections to the singing of "Dixie," by Daniel Decatur Emmett, in a middle school's year-end musical program, for being "a rallying cry for the South that they should have been able to continue with slavery." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following complaints by the objector, the principal and the music staff decided to omit the song from the concert. It was part of the program called "Patriotic Potpourri." Though the music teacher had told the objectors' two daughters that they did not have to sing that song during the concert, the objector complained to the school and to the newspapers. One board member said that the song had been included to represent a specific time in musical history. "They [teachers] did not feel that it would be detrimental to use some songs that were obviously taken from a period that had different insights than we have today," she said.

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INCIDENT: In Sawyers Bar, objections to the characters Bert and Ernie, who "live together" on the television program *Sesame Street*, being viewed in a kindergarten class, for promoting homosexuality. Teacher previewing of all episodes to ensure that homosexuality is not promoted requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Although the teacher, who is also the principal, called *Sesame Street* "one of the finer programs for children," she agreed to tape each episode and monitor it before classroom viewing. In one episode, Bert and Ernie discussed different kinds of families, but since no reference was made to same-sex parents, the teacher deemed it acceptable.

INCIDENT: In Simi Valley, a challenge to two sexuality education textbooks, *Human Sexuality: Values and Choices* and *Teen Sexual Behavior: A Leader's Resource of Practical Strategies with Youth*, excerpts of which were approved for use in seventh- and tenth-grade family life curriculum, respectively. Objectors charged that the books do not stress abstinence only: "Nowhere in these books does it tell the kids it's wrong to have sex before you are married or while you're a teenager," said one. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Citizens for Truth in Education, a parents' group formed to promote abstinence-only sex education.

RESOLUTION: Though the objectors raised their complaints about the material at school board meetings, excerpts from the books remain in the plan for next year's curriculum.

Guidelines for family-life education were developed by a task force of citizens, administrators, teachers, and parents; those guidelines were approved by the school board, which then charged a committee of teachers and nurses with developing course materials appropriate to the task force's recommendations. The excerpts from the books were compiled along with a variety of other materials. School officials stress that the books as a whole have not been approved, that they are primarily teachers' guides, and that many lessons do emphasize abstinence.

INCIDENT: In Simi Valley, in settling a lawsuit with the American Civil Liberties Union, a junior high school repealed its dress code, which required that students' shirts could not have "writing or pictures (with the exception of [school] spirit shirts)." The lawsuit was instigated by a ninth-grade student who was repeatedly sent home for wearing T-shirts with pictures of the American flag and the bald eagle. Said the student, "[e]very day I go in and ask if I can go to school, and they say I can't....I'm just supporting my country." The school district denied that the dress code violated students' civil rights. However, one of the student's attorneys said that though it is permissible "for schools to control activities that disrupt the educational process, [t]here is no evidence that that has occurred."

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INCIDENT: In Suisun City, objections to *Jack* by A.M. Holmes and *Sula* by Toni Morrison, on a list of books being considered for approval by the school board for use in the high schools, for allegedly being sexually explicit, racist and degrading. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents, principals and a school board member.

RESOLUTION: Just before board members were to vote on the books, which had been recommended by teachers, high school principals removed them from the list.

One school board member passed out copies of excerpts from the two books to the other members, refusing to read the "offensive" passages out loud. She asked, "What are the high school English departments thinking to recommend these books?" Another member indicated that teachers should be more aware of the kind of books the board would find appropriate and referred to a book that was removed from the list last year because it was deemed sexually explicit.

INCIDENT: In Tracy, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark,* and *Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones,* by Alvin Schwartz, available in elementary school libraries, for allegedly being too violent. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted to retain the popular children's titles in the school library. The superintendent initially upheld the committee's recommendation, referring the issue to the school board. Before the school board had an opportunity to meet, the superintendent retracted his support for the books and placed them in a restricted category making them available only to fourth- and fifth-graders and younger students with permission slips. Librarians at the school feared that this decision conveyed the message that "this is a bad book." Many parents called the school to express support for the books; only three called with complaints. The librarian declared, "Horror and scary stories have a place in the curriculum and in the library."

INCIDENT: In Ventura, objections to *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros and *The Kitchen God's Wife* by Amy Tan, in use as supplemental material in a tenth-grade English class, the first for allegedly being "anti-male" and "depressing" and containing "situational ethics," and the second for being "sexually explicit." Removal from recommended reading list requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A review panel voted to retain both novels, recommending that students who are taught *The Kitchen God's Wife* be "emotionally and intellectually mature," that parents be informed in writing that the books contain sexually explicit material, and that alternative assignments be available to parents and students who request them.

The objector, in one eleven-page letter, one four-page letter, and two official requests for reconsideration, stated that "as a taxpayer" he does not want to have "topics such as: wife abuse, child abuse, prostitution, rape and other sexual innuendo" discussed in school. He went on to write that such discussion "could also help to break down any modesty that may be left between the sexes."

However, the review panel's decision found that the sexual references mentioned by the objector were taken out of context and stated that "All students should not be denied access to these books based upon [his] disagreement with the ideas presented in the books." The panel also noted that "both novels supported the theme of the tenth-grade curriculum — The Individual and Society" and that "they present points of view of females from Hispanic American and Chinese American backgrounds, views which enlarge the world view of students."

INCIDENT: In Ventura County, objections to the participation of Planned Parenthood and AIDS Care in workshops for county teachers on contraception and HIV/AIDS prevention, on the grounds that these organizations promote safe sex rather than abstinence prior to marriage. Ban on these groups' participation proposed.

OBJECTOR: Board of education president, supported by other board members, using materials from the Rutherford Institute.

RESOLUTION: The board of education voted 3-2 to ban Planned Parenthood and AIDS Care from the workshops.

Approximately 200 people showed up at the board of education meeting to debate the issue, and 88 of the 100 people who requested to speak did so. Fifty-eight of those opposed the ban. The objector stated that these agencies provide teachers more information about how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases than is required by California law, which requires that AIDS prevention be taught in grades seven through twelve. A community member agreed that the agencies "vocally support an agenda that is not traditional pro-family values."

However, a representative of Planned Parenthood argued that the organization's educators always stress abstinence. "If these people want to bet that their kids are not having sex, they'd better be willing to bet their children's lives on that," commented the executive director of AIDS Care. "I'm outraged that they would want to restrict the flow of information that could save kids' lives."

The county superintendent provided legal opinions stating that the school board does not have the authority to ban the agencies from participating in the county workshops; the school board provided an opinion from the Rutherford Institute that it does have this authority. The superintendent has stated that he will take the case to the California Attorney General; the board has stated that it will take the case to the Supreme Court if necessary.

As a result of this controversy, a recall effort was launched to oust the school board president and one of the other two board members who voted for the ban. The latter is charged in the recall petition with violating her stewardship of public education by trying to advance her own religious agenda. In her response, she stated that she has "kept [her] stewardship by voting to deny abortion providers and homosexuals from presenting their agenda in a teachers' workshop."

INCIDENT: In Visalia, a court of appeals issued a ruling allowing school officials to restrict use of a prize-winning student-produced video on teen pregnancy. The video had been produced during the 1991-92 school year in a high school film arts class and club. When school officials challenged the use of profanity in the video, students refused to remove all objectionable words and school officials refused to let them show the film to the public or use it as a fundraiser.

The students sued the school district, relying on a state statute protecting students' free speech rights and prohibiting prior censorship of school publications unless they are libelous, obscene, or likely to incite others to commit illegal or disruptive acts. The court ruled in 1992 that school officials had exceeded their authority, and that students could show the video and enter it in a statewide competition where it won first prize in its category.

This year's court ruling reversed that decision and held that school officials had the authority to restrict use of the video and could define "obscenity" broadly enough to cover the language used in the video.

INCIDENT: In West Covina, objections to a workshop called "Out of the Closet and Into the Classroom," scheduled to be presented at an annual conference for middle school teachers in eleven school districts, for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Cancellation requested.

OBJECTOR: Two school board members, one of whom has ties to the Eagle Forum.

RESOLUTION: After learning about the planned workshop a few days before the conference, the objectors ordered its cancellation. "I think it's inappropriate to promote homosexuality for 12- and 13-year-olds," said one of them. "We don't pay our teachers to be counselors." The workshop was intended to promote sensitivity to lesbian, gay and bisexual students.

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As many as 500 teachers walked out of the conference for 20 minutes at the beginning of the day to protest the cancellation. Many of them wore black ribbons. One educator said, "Two years ago I found one of my students hovering and crying in the bushes on campus. He had been threatened by other students because he was gay. That student has since gone on to the high school where he attempted suicide. What will it take for [the objectors] to wake up and realize these at-risk students need protection[?] [O]ne life, two lives?"

Some teachers were also critical of the board members' decision because there was no full board vote and their actions affected conference participants from other school districts. Thirty-three teachers are suing the objectors and the superintendent for violating the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.

INCIDENT: In Woodland Hills, objections to an AIDS awareness seminar presented to seventh- and eighth-graders at a junior high school, for allegedly graphic content and for undermining parental authority. Review of the program by the state legislature requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and state legislator.

RESOLUTION: The seminar, which was funded and approved by the Centers for Disease Control and endorsed by the school district's AIDS education coordinator, remains in use in district schools and has not been reviewed by the state legislature.

Although they had signed permission slips for their children to attend the seminar, objectors went to school officials and to local newspapers with complaints that they had not known the program would include, for example, a penis-shaped wooden prop to teach condom use and references to how parents may not understand kids. School officials and workers at the clinic that presented the seminar maintain that it stresses abstinence and that many students do not feel comfortable talking with their parents.

The school principal stated that it was a mistake not to have offered parents the opportunity to preview the material. But a state legislator took her concern about the content of the program a step further and requested a review of the seminar by the legislature, stating "If they don't respond and bring this course to the capital, I will wonder what they are trying to hide. Maybe it is not suitable for adult legislators to see."

INCIDENT: Based in California but affecting an undisclosed number of schools across the nation, objections to *Who Built America*, for containing references to homosexuality, abortion and birth control. The CD-ROM, produced by Voyager, Co., was included by Apple Computer Corporation in a bundle of software to be distributed to primary and secondary schools that have purchased Apple comput-

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ers. Included in the multitude of historical information were three gay-related references: a poem written by a gay cowboy about his dead lover, a letter written by a gay immigrant who fled persecution in Germany, and a newspaper obituary of a New York politician who pretended to be a man but was discovered at her death to be a woman, along with the story of a New York woman recounting her twelve painful abortions. After receiving complaints, Apple requested that Voyager edit the controversial material out of the CD-ROM.

OBJECTOR: School districts and Apple Computer Corporation.

RESOLUTION: Declaring "this is a customer satisfaction issue, it is not an issue of censorship," Apple Computer requested that Voyager provide a version of *Who Built America* with the offending material removed, saying that the complaints they had received were "enough that we thought it was relevant." Voyager refused to tamper with the American Historical Association's James Harvey Robinson Prize-winning CD-ROM, which provides an electronic history of the United States between 1876 and 1914, and includes more than four and a half hours of audio material, 45 minutes of archival film, over 700 pictures and more than 5,000 pages of historical documents. The American Historical Association declared it "the most outstanding contribution to the teaching and learning of history in any field for public or educational purposes."

While Voyager contends that Apple has decided not to include the CD-ROM in its elementary school bundles, Apple claims the "decision to bundle or not to bundle this CD in the next version is in the process of being finalized."

INCIDENT: In California, a Parental Rights Amendment has been introduced in both houses of the state legislature. The amendment purports to be an attempt to ensure that the rights of parents will not be infringed, but opponents are concerned that it may open the door to increased censorship. It was debated in committee in both houses, but since there was insufficient support, a motion was made to hold it over for a year, ensuring further debate in upcoming legislative sessions.

"The right of parenthood is not a right of the state. Those children are given by the creator to the mother and the father," said Assemblyman George House in defense of his bill. But opponents point out that the rights of parents are already guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. They believe that the amendment is driven by other considerations. It is "a political cover for a right-wing agenda," said the director of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League. "I think their real intent is to control the materials and content of courses their children are exposed to and dictate a point of view they possess to the rest of us," she added, referring to concerns that the proposed legislation would facilitate censorship in school libraries and curriculum design by giving parents the right to veto materials, regardless of other parents' wishes. Opponents also believe that the amendment could put children at risk by weakening existing child labor laws and making it harder to investigate and prosecute child abuse.

COLORADO

STATE OVERVIEW

In Littleton, *A Separate Peace* was challenged for lacking "literary worthiness." Other materials challenged include *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Roman Polanski's film version of *Macbeth*.

INCIDENT: In Boulder, objections to the singing of "Silent Night," the finale and recessional performed by high school choir students at the Winter Holiday Concert, for allegedly making the concert into a religious service. Request for the choir to sing "Silent Night" at a different point in the concert.

OBJECTOR: Community members and school district officials.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a decision by the executive director for administrative services and the principal removing "Silent Night" as the finale or recessional. School officials said they denied the choir directors' request to close the concert with "Silent Night" in order to respect community diversity, and to comply with Supreme Court rulings on separation of church and state. Administrators decided that "Silent Night" could still be included as part of the concert, but ordered that a song without "religious content" should be performed as the finale.

At the close of the Winter Holiday Concert, students marched in defiance into the aisles singing "Silent Night," followed briefly by a secular song. Audience members — adults and students — then "spontaneously" hummed "Silent Night" while choir students recessed from the auditorium. According to a school official, "It is always distressing to me when adults have the opportunity to be positive role models, then choose, as adults, to behave another way." An appeal to the Board of Education from "Silent Night" supporters is pending, and a conservative political group has offered support for a lawsuit against the district.

INCIDENT: In Boulder, objections to the song "Under One Sky" by Ruth Pelham, performed by elementary school students at a public evening performance, for teaching "monism" and the Ba'hai religion. The original objection was to the teaching of Hinduism, later modified to the teaching of Ba'hai religion because the song is published under the "auspices" of Ba'hai publications. The objectors believed that the lines "we are all one flower/we are all one sky/we are all one daisy" promoted monism, and "people were being looked at as the same as all of these other things." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld the unanimous decision of a district level committee to retain the song. The school committee had decided to retain the song and inform objectors that students could opt out of the activity.

COLORADO

Dissatisfied with the committee's decision, the objectors appealed to the district curriculum and instruction committee and the superintendent. The district committee voted to support use of the song, with the superintendent concluding that "there was no intent to teach religion, this was merely a song that was chosen."

INCIDENT: In Colorado Springs, objections to a human sexuality curriculum, proposed for use in a middle school, for sixth- through eighth-grade science classes as part of a three-week sex education unit, for co-ed instruction, not teaching abstinence until marriage and not being offered as an elective. Rejection requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents, some of whom were affiliated with Focus on the Family.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 3-1 to adopt the human sexuality curriculum. In accordance with state law and a board statement on abstinence-based human sexuality programs, a district committee of parents and teachers had revised the curriculum to stress abstinence, encourage parents and students to discuss sex at home, and teach hygiene instruction in single-sex classes. Parents can opt their children out of all or part of the sexuality unit, transfer them to another class for the duration of the unit, or teach the curriculum at home.

After a teacher showed an unapproved anti-abortion video clip in a human sexuality unit in seventh-grade science classes during the 1992-93 school year, the curriculum was suspended for revisions to regulate teacher instruction. Objectors had opposed the proposed human sexuality curriculum for the past year at school board meetings and in the media. One objector to the curriculum presented a petition of 1,000 signatures requesting that human sexuality education be taught as an elective class. After previewing the curriculum, another objector stated, "What I see is extremely premature for 11-, 12- and 13- year-old kids. It's titillating even. It's almost sexual harassment to expose boys and girls to this in the same classrooms."

In response to objections, the school board removed a pamphlet, *101 Ways to Make Love Without Really Doing It* from the curriculum and have replaced it with *Parenting Prices*, a cost analysis of having a child, and *Babies Change Your Life*, which explores the realities of parenthood. The human sexuality unit was available for use this spring, and at the time this report went to press, a review committee was surveying student and parent reaction to the curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Littleton, objections to *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, in use in a ninth-grade language arts class, for failing to merit "literary worthiness." The objector felt the classic was "negative and pointless" and did not provide "quality, wholesomeness and uplifting material in their academics." Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: After the objector stated her initial objection to the teacher, her child was given an alternative assignment. The objector was not satisfied with this arrangement, and took her complaint directly to the school board, wielding a packet of 84 "objectionable" quotations from the text and their corresponding page numbers. The school board informed her that she must follow the policy regarding the reconsideration of instructional materials and file a formal complaint. The objector filed a formal complaint and drafted a letter to the principal including a list of "suggested high school reading alternatives." The school board upheld a review committee's unanimous vote to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Mapleton, objections to *Macbeth*, a film directed by Roman Polánski, shown to an eleventh-grade elective English Literature class, for containing sex and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Permission slips were sent home prior to the film's showing and an alternative assignment was made available to any student whose parents requested it. The objector was unhappy with this arrangement, however, and complained to the school board about the showing of R-rated films to students. The complaint prompted the board to issue a moratorium on all R-rated films until a policy could be developed regarding the use of films as part of the curriculum.

The policy subsequently passed prohibited the showing of R-rated films to any student below the ninth grade. Any R-rated film to be shown in grades nine through twelve must first receive approval from the site principal and must be demonstrated to be a necessary part of the curriculum. Students must receive written permission from their parents or guardians and, if an edited or non-R-rated version of the film exists, it must be used instead of the R-rated version. But some school officials were disturbed that one angry parent could impede the learning process for so many students throughout the district, saying the new policy is an "encroachment on academic freedom, encroachment on teacher's freedom to choose materials... an encroachment on the truth." One administrator lamented that "academic freedom has been smashed in forming this policy."

INCIDENT: In Parker, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, in use in an elective Modern American Literature class in a high school, for containing accounts of the sexual molestation and rape of the author. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

COLORADO

RESOLUTION: The superintendent accepted a review committee's recommendation that the book be retained. In an appeal to the school board the objectors modified their request, asking that each student be required to obtain parental permission to read the book and that excerpts of the book be sent to parents. In response, the school board noted that provisions for alternative assignments were already included in the policy.

CONNECTICUT

STATE OVERVIEW

A statewide bill that would have instituted tuition vouchers was defeated. In New Haven, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was removed from classroom use. Other attacks in Connecticut include objections to *Just Friends, Taming the Star Runner,* and books by Alvin Schwartz.

INCIDENT: In Enfield, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* and *Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones,* all by Alvin Schwartz, available in elementary school libraries, for containing "vile images" that are "ready content for a child's nightmares." The objector requested that "literature of the horror genre not be read aloud to students, nor given to them to read on their own." He additionally requested that all "horror literature" be removed from district libraries.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 7-1 to retain the series in the library, but to forbid teachers to read the stories aloud in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms.

Initially, the superintendent upheld a review committee's decision to retain the books. The committee noted that the series is "extremely popular with young readers" and provides "meticulously documented folklore." Additionally, committee members did not wish to "[deprive] youngsters of the opportunity to develop the intellectual integrity of forming judgments." When the objector appealed the decision to the school board, the committee, in an effort to compromise, reconvened and amended its decision, voting to require students in grades kindergarten through three to obtain parental permission before checking out the books. The board altered the recommendation, ruling that parents could notify the library if they do not want their children to have access to the books.

Said one district resident, before the board made its decision, "Censorship begins and should stay at home. I don't want the Board of Education to tell me or my child what we can and cannot read."

CONNECTICUT

INCIDENT: In Hamden, objections to *Just Friends* by Norma Klein and *Taming the Star Runner* by S.E. Hinton, included on a school board-approved summer reading list for seventh-grade students, for profanity and sexual content. The objector described *Just Friends* as "nothing more than pornographic smut" and said, "I was shocked when I saw the kind of trash the school system was trying to pass off as children's literature. My God, this is the kind of thing you find in an X-rated bookstore!" Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: After the parent lodged her complaint, *Just Friends* was removed from the middle school suggested summer reading list and placed on the high school suggested summer reading list, but remains available in the middle school library. *Taming the Star Runner* was removed from both lists, but remains available in the middle and high school libraries because, according to a school official, "we need diverse literature on the shelf." She explained that no one fought for the books because that would have made "too much of an issue" and that made "no sense when there are too many other books to suggest."

INCIDENT: In New Haven, objections to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, in use in an eighth-grade course on history and literature, on the grounds that it uses the word "nigger" and that it has an adverse effect on African American children. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent pulled the book from the classroom, stating "I won't let this school be torn apart. This is not censorship. It's a curriculum issue. It has gone out of control and it's become a very divisive thing."

Students reported to their parents that a white student snickered during an in-class reading of the text, when the word "nigger" was read aloud; outside of class, other students mimicked the dialect of Jim, the runaway slave in the novel. These incidents came up at a gathering of parents who then "began looking at the book and looking at the effect that the language in the book was having on our African American children." Defenders of the novel argued that the character Jim is "one of the most powerful and memorable black characters in all of American literature" and that *Huckleberry Finn* is an excellent tool for teaching about racism. However, one objector noted that he doubted whether eighth-graders have the intellectual maturity to comprehend Twain's underlying anti-racist message.

Objectors met with the superintendent, who scheduled a meeting with a larger group of parents but then canceled that meeting and simply announced that the book would no longer be used in class. It is still available in the school library.

CONNECTICUT

INCIDENT: In Connecticut, tuition voucher legislation was introduced in the state legislature that would have allowed parents to use public education funds to send their children to private schools, both non-sectarian and religious. Those opposed to voucher programs point to the ramifications of draining already diminishing resources from public education. Opponents of the legislation also assert that the use of public funds for religious school tuition threatens the separation of church and state. The bill was defeated, but its proponents promise that it will be introduced again next session.

DELAWARE

STATE OVERVIEW

Outcome based education reform (OBE) was challenged by the Delaware chapter of the Christian Coalition and other Religious Right groups. An award-winning student drawing of a nude woman was removed from display by the assistant principal.

INCIDENT: In New Castle, objections to a charcoal drawing of a nude female, drawn by a student and entered in a high school art show, for being inappropriate. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Assistant principal.

RESOLUTION: When the art instructor refused to take the student's National Scholastic Award-winning drawing out of the art show, the assistant principal removed the piece from the display. In protest, the instructor refused to present the art awards at the show, handing them over to the principal; and the other student artists expressed to the audience their anger concerning the administration's actions and then refused to accept their own awards. The administration did not respond to a letter of outrage written by the faculty objecting to the removal of the drawing, but the student was later asked to remove the drawing from the campus and never return with it. The ACLU has threatened to bring a lawsuit against the school if a resolution is not worked out prohibiting such action in the future. The school board is currently developing such a policy.

INCIDENT: In Delaware, objections to *New Directions*, a five-year educational reform program, for allegedly pushing a social agenda rather than teaching academics, "dumbing-down" the curriculum and "accepting mediocrity." Opponents claim that the program aims "to white-wash Judeo-Christian values. They want the schools to teach comfortable, values-less education. They don't want to talk about God....They don't want to acknowledge that George Washington got down on his knees and prayed in the snow." Rejection of *New Directions* and the implementation of a "back-to-basics" program requested.

DELAWARE

OBJECTOR: Members of the Coalition for Back to Basics in Education, a local group comprising the Delaware chapter of the Christian Coalition, the Delaware Family Foundation and the American Association of Educators.

RESOLUTION: While the resolution aimed at terminating *New Directions* never came up for a vote in the Senate, House Republicans proposed channeling all of the program's money into disciplinary reform programs, claiming that all new education ideas would fail if student behavior continues to be a major problem. The Joint Finance Committee voted to cut $940,000 from the $5.8 million proposed for the educational improvement plan to expand disciplinary and alternative programs for unruly students. The committee agreed to continue developing standards in foreign languages, arts, agriculture and business education.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

STATE OVERVIEW

No challenges to instructional materials were reported during the 1994-95 school year.

FLORIDA

STATE OVERVIEW

In Mount Dora, an elementary school principal removed a World War II commemorative exhibit for its inclusion of a Holocaust poster containing nudity. Assisted by the Institute for Creation Research, a St. Lucie County coalition waged an intensive but ultimately unsuccessful campaign to introduce the Creationist textbook *Of Pandas and People* into the science curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Bradenton, objections to "I Want to Know," an AIDS education play written by K.T. Curran and owned by Planned Parenthood, to be performed as supplemental material for an eighth-grade class as part of the district's Human Growth and Development curriculum, for allegedly failing to promote abstinence. An objector, whose children do not attend public school in the county, claims the play "makes it sound like it's all right to have sex, as long as you don't have sex with someone who has HIV." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: A community group based in a local church.

FLORIDA

RESOLUTION: Performance of the play was suspended pending a formal review by the school board. After several delays due to lack of attendance at board meetings, the play was narrowly approved in a 3-2 vote one month before the close of the school year. Two board members requested a blanket ban on all Planned Parenthood involvement with the public school system, but that proposal was also defeated by a 3-2 vote.

INCIDENT: In Cooper City, controversy erupted in the community over religious posters displayed on high school bulletin boards by a student Bible club. The posters stated "Know Jesus, Know God; No Jesus, No God," displayed a scriptural quote that said Jews have access to God through Jesus, and contained an illustration of the Nativity scene in silhouette. Students, parents and a local rabbi objected to the posters on the grounds that they violated the separation of church and state, and one student expressed the view that the controversy over the posters was distracting students from classroom time. Said the rabbi: "I don't believe the school should be the grounds for dissemination of religious points of view or propaganda. I believe the school should be neutral, a place where everyone can come to learn."

School officials ordered the leader of the student Bible club to remove the silhouette illustration. The student consulted an attorney from the American Center for Law and Justice, who contacted school officials and argued that the student's right to free speech had been violated by the removal of the poster. Two attorneys to the school board offered legal opinions: the first opined that federal law as well as school district policy protected the posters; the second attorney pointed out, however, that if the "free speech" involved would disrupt the educational process it can be restricted in schools.

The superintendent has asked for a school board policy review to address the issue, and those objecting to the posters are considering litigation against the school district.

INCIDENT: In Crawfordville, objections to *Ms.* magazine, available in a middle school library, on the grounds that it is not appropriate for students. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School bus driver and principal.

RESOLUTION: In violation of the reconsideration policy, the principal removed all issues of *Ms.* from the library shelves.

A school bus driver initially brought the magazine to the principal's attention, complaining about the magazine's back cover. Under the heading "No Comment," the back cover shows what the editors regard to be sexist advertise-

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ments that appear in other magazines. Initially the principal suggested to the librarian that the back covers be removed from all issues of the magazine, but then he simply removed the entire collection, which dated from 1980.

Ms. has since stopped printing the "No Comment" feature on the back cover, but all issues of the magazine remain off the shelves. The librarian plans to write a formal letter of complaint. She noted that students cannot get anywhere else the kind of information *Ms.* provides.

INCIDENT: In Daytona Beach, objections to *Tex* by S.E. Hinton, in use in eighth-grade reading classes, for encouraging violence, taking "the name of God in vain," and profanity such as "goddamn" and "hell." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent accepted a review committee's recommendation to retain the book. One committee member said that the book contained "positive messages about family bonds, love, and responsibility" and the passages cited as promoting violence "did just the opposite." Said the middle school principal, "I read the book as the development of a young man and the life and experiences and challenges that he meets....The book is realistic in its theme and approach."

The objector first complained to the school board, prompting one board member to request a review of all secondary school materials. Prior to filing a formal complaint, the objector had garnered media attention for protesting *Tex* and the television series *Degrassi Junior High*, supplemental material in use in junior high guidance programs. He eventually met with administrators and filed a formal complaint against *Tex*.

INCIDENT: In Gainesville, objections to three books available in a sixth-grade classroom library: *Broken Hearts* by R.L. Stine for being "excessively violent," and *Final Friends Book 3: The Graduation* and *Fall Into Darkness* by Christopher Pike for containing "excessive profanity" and "sexually suggestive" material. Wrote the objector, "The majority of [Mr. Pike's] books are basically high school soap opera trash and do not merit teacher recommendation." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to remove *Final Friends Book 3:The Graduation*, concluding that it was "not appropriate for middle school students."

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Fall Into Darkness and *Broken Hearts* were moved to an eighth-grade classroom library for "more mature" students. In the future, the school will include the statement, "Not all books written by every author may be appropriate for all students," on all suggested books.

INCIDENT: In Gainesville, objections to *Forever* by Judy Blume, available in eighth-grade classroom libraries, for containing "passages about having sex and smoking grass." The objector alleged that having the book in school reinforces the idea that "sex is OK at their age." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher who is the parent of a sixth-grade child.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to remove the book from all reading class libraries. The committee said that the book contained concepts and "offensive language" that were inappropriate, even though it addressed "the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various groups of people." Said the author when interviewed about the challenge to her novel, "I think what so many adults object to is that the young woman (in *Forever*) actually enjoys her sexuality, and it seems to make a lot of people very upset that she should be allowed to enjoy this."

INCIDENT: In Inverness, assorted challenges to the self-esteem program *Pumsy in Pursuit of Excellence* and other "New Age" teaching techniques and programs, on the grounds that *Pumsy* teaches children about "safe places" other than Jesus. Objections were also raised to drug-abuse prevention programs and other material in classes ranging from drama to music to language arts. The objectors proposed a ban on hypnosis, guided imagery, and meditation in county schools and requested that a "values committee" review the DARE drug-abuse prevention program. One objector, a school board member, also wrote a letter to her fellow board members proposing an opt-in rather than the existing opt-out policy for certain school programs; in other words, students would need their parents' permission to participate in exercises and programs rather than having parental permission to be excused from them.

OBJECTOR: Concerned Parents of Citrus County, using language and materials from the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: The district policy committee studied various policy options for a year and recommended to the board that no policy change was necessary. The board voted 3-2 to accept that recommendation. One board member in favor of the current opt-out policy stated, "With opt out you have the right to opt out. No one is saying your child is in the program whether you like it or not. No one is cramming this down your throat...you're exercising your parental rights" by opting out. The objectors have threatened legal action.

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Earlier in the year, the objectors withdrew their challenge to the DARE drug-abuse prevention program, which was subsequently implemented. The ban on hypnosis and meditation was rejected by county administrators as being too vague and general and interfering with teachers' ability to teach, particularly since the techniques in question are not in use.

INCIDENT: In Lawtey, objections to *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in a K-8 library, for violent content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 4-0 to retain the book, upholding the decisions of both a school-wide review committee and a district-wide review committee. One parent protested the decision, saying, "We have the right to say what our children should read. If children are able to choose for themselves, why did God give them parents?" But a member of the school board asserted, "I can decide for my children, but other parents should have the right to decide for their children also, and we can't take away their right by removing the book from the shelf."

INCIDENT: In Mount Dora, objections to an exhibit commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, taken from a collection at the National Archives and featured at an elementary school, for including a three-by-five-foot poster of the Holocaust, which incorporated a five-by-five-inch photograph of a Nazi death camp victim whose penis is exposed. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal, school staff member, parent.

RESOLUTION: After a school staff member complained about the graphic nature of the display, the principal ordered that the entire 75-poster exhibit be removed, saying he "felt that maybe they were inappropriate for elementary children." But the veteran who volunteered to transport the exhibit to schools and libraries throughout the county was disturbed at the school's reaction to a realistic and educational portrayal of the war, saying, "We've had a lot of good compliments from the teachers. The kids were interested in everything. It was only this one school that decided they didn't want it."

INCIDENT: In Orange County, a fourth-grade student was told not to bring his Bible to school, on the grounds that to do so would violate the separation of church and state. According to school officials, he had been reading it aloud in the classroom and in the courtyard, and was, according to his teacher, disruptive. His parents claimed he was only reading to himself, and during non-instructional times.

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Liberty Counsel, a Religious Right legal organization, filed a lawsuit on behalf of the student and his parents, suing the school district, the elementary school, the teacher and principal for violating the student's free speech and religious freedom rights under the Constitution and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The lawsuit was pending as this report went to press.

INCIDENT: In Palm Bay, objections to *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly having a "negative nature." The objector claimed that the book "glorifies maliciousness, ill fate, death, evil doing, killing, being trapped and unable to escape, poisoning, etc." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to remove the popular children's book from the "Easy" section of the library and place it in the non-fiction section under poetry. The sticker labeling the book as part of the library's Halloween collection was removed from the book's spine and a code was entered into the computerized check-out system to "alert the library assistants to check with student's parents on the appropriateness of the book" before lending it out.

INCIDENT: In Pensacola, objections to *The Puberty Years*, a sex education video produced by Human Relations Media, used once in a seventh- and eighth-grade Personal Development class, on the grounds that it is not age-appropriate and that it contains a slang term for the male genitals. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The video is no longer in use in the class. Parents made verbal complaints to the school superintendent, who convened a district-wide committee of administrators and educators to determine a course of action. The committee decided that the video was not age-appropriate and that there were other materials that would teach the same concepts without using slang. The video had never been formally adopted by a curriculum committee and thus was not subject to the formal reconsideration process; it had been used by an outside agency that does educational programs in the schools. *The Puberty Years* can still be used by parents at home, but the committee has requested that the outside agency use a different video in the Personal Development class.

INCIDENT: In Port Charlotte, objections to *The Last of the Wine* by Mary Renault, in use in a tenth-grade honors world history class, for references to homosexuality. Alleging that the novel detailed homosexual acts, the objectors said, "Homosexuality is highly offensive and totally unnatural and has no place in our high school classes unless it is revealed how it leads to the decadence of any society." Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to uphold the decisions of building and district review committees to retain the book. Although district policy was followed, the objectors used the public hearings to present their views about homosexuality and to publicly attack the teacher. The objectors were allowed a second district hearing after complaining that the guidelines were unclear. Before appealing to the district committee, the objectors circulated fliers and letters asking other residents to protest to the administration and alleging that the book contained pedophilia and bisexuality and presented "homosexuality in Ancient Greece in a positive light with no consequences."

The teacher had begun to face attacks from Religious Right activists several years ago when he began teaching a World Religions class. At the board meeting, the objectors showed portions of the Religious Right anti-gay video, "The Gay Agenda"; called the former Charlotte County Teacher of the Year a sexual predator, a sexual harasser, and a promoter of homosexuality; and asked that a letter of reprimand be placed in his file. Said one teacher to the board after the presentation, "I believe that the [objectors] have caused more emotional damage than Mary Renault ever could."

Following the school board's decision to retain the book, the objectors attempted to file a new complaint against the book, identifying themselves as Taxpayers against *The Last of the Wine*, but district officials said that they would not reopen the complaint. Said one letter to the local paper, "Would [the objectors] like all literature banned that was written by gay people? The list is long and illustrious. I certainly don't want such narrow-mindedness ever to decide what has any educational value."

INCIDENT: In St. Lucie County, 35 local ministers submitted *Of Pandas and People* by Dean Kenyon, a textbook advocating the "intelligent design" theory of Creation, for use as supplemental reading in district science classes. In a letter to area pastors urging action on Creationism, the group's director wrote that the "doors have been opened for the Body of Christ to minister on the school campuses." Inclusion of Creationism in the science curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Members of the Civic, Business, and Ministry Coalition of St. Lucie County with assistance from the Institute for Creation Research.

RESOLUTION: The group met repeatedly with the superintendent to lobby for the inclusion of Creationism in science classes. Said one proponent, "Without [Creationism], our kids are getting a socialist, one-world view." Although proponents claimed that Creationism is a scientific model, another area religious leader opposed to the use of the book said, "I don't expect schools to teach my children anything about my faith. That's my responsibility as a parent and as a pastor."

The meetings prompted opposition from other area clergy, school board members, and community members. The superintendent said that the district would not teach Creationism, but told the school board that teachers should be free "to permit open classroom discussion on alternate theories, including the possibility of an intelligent creator." The book was ultimately rejected by the district's textbook committee.

INCIDENT: In Sarasota, objections to contraceptive services at a state-run health clinic, located on an elementary school campus, for violation of the school district's policy of teaching abstinence. Removal of contraceptive services at the clinic requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member and parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 3-2 to retain the school health plan allowing the use of contraceptive services and condom distribution at the state-supported and state-run health clinic. After a previous 3-2 vote on the same issue, one of the two members opposing the health plan requested that it be amended to eliminate condom distribution from the clinic. The school board member asserted "Our policy is abstinence is taught. The school board made a decision to teach abstinence, not how to tear open foil packets."

The second vote resulted in the same 3-2 split in favor of the plan and condom distribution. Although the clinic is on the elementary school campus, it is not inside the school, and minors who go to the clinic for contraceptives undergo an extensive screening process.

INCIDENT: In Tavares, objections to the film versions of *Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet,* and *Excalibur*, in use in twelfth-grade English classes, for nudity. Editing of nudity requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent and school principal.

RESOLUTION: In the past, teachers had allowed students who did not wish to view the films to go to the library. In addition, teachers fast-forwarded through the brief nude scenes. Upon receiving a complaint about nudity from a parent whose child was not in the classes viewing the films, the school principal edited the brief scenes of nudity from the films, on the grounds that they were inappropriate for classroom use. Many students and parents complained about the edits to a local reporter, who went to the school and personally viewed the films. When the reporter warned the principal that the edits constituted copyright violations, the principal destroyed the films. The principal claims that he has ordered new, edited versions of the films for future English classes.

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STATE OVERVIEW

In Marietta, a middle school student was denied the right to publish her poem addressing the issue of homophobia in the school's literary journal. In Coweta County, *Bridge to Terabithia, James and the Giant Peach* and *Julie of the Wolves* faced a challenge. In other districts, objections were raised to the classic Mark Twain novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for alleged racist content, and to John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* for its use of profanity.

INCIDENT: In Atlanta, objections to a series of articles on teen-age sex, in a high school student newspaper, based on an adverse "political climate." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The principal did not allow the articles to be printed in the newspaper because they discussed distributing condoms and surveying students about sexual behavior. According to the principal, "This is the only thing I've ever asked them not to do...Last year they did anything they wanted." In response to the principal's decision, a student-written editorial said, "High school is supposed to be preparing us for reality. Aren't sex, pregnancy, AIDS and other STDs reality? These things are out there, aren't they? What better way to attempt to prevent them than through education, but no! That's not the way things work."

INCIDENT: In Bibb County, objections to a proposed sexuality education curriculum for kindergarten through twelfth grade, developed to comply with state requirements, for containing materials that are allegedly too explicit and teach children the "right way to do the wrong thing." Removal of materials from curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member and parents.

RESOLUTION: Following objections to some materials the board voted to remove nine materials from the proposed curriculum and separate eighth-graders by gender during human reproduction lessons. The board vote 6-2 to implement the curriculum, including 24 materials that were pending board review due to objections.

Some parents continued to voice objections after the final vote. One parent sent letters to 2000 elementary school parents denouncing the curriculum for allegedly crude and explicit materials. A group of parents continued to protest some of the materials that define sexual acts and explain how diseases are transmitted, alleging that they teach "sodomy" and "fornication." Said one objector of the program, "It violates what God teaches....I want to remind you that ultimately you are responsible to God."

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INCIDENT: In Butler, objections to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, in use in ninth-grade classrooms, for "racial slurs" and "bad grammar." The objectors charged that "the book does not reject the idea of slavery." Said one objector, "Yes, we do want the book removed from the reading list. Yes, it is racist. Some people may see it another way, but everyone has their own opinion about it." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The board of education voted unanimously to accept a review committee's recommendation to move the book from ninth- to tenth-grade classes "to promote a more mature understanding of its theme and content and to encourage a multi-disciplinary approach to the historical as well as the literary significance of the novel." The committee wrote that Twain used realism "to poke fun at a society which at that time not only embraced slavery but also condoned human cruelty in other forms....Huck wrestles with his conscience...and finally decides that mankind's inhumanity...is morally wrong."

INCIDENT: In Coweta County, objections to *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *Stepping on the Cracks* and *Wait till Helen Comes* by Mary Downing Hahn, *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl, *Julie of the Wolves* by Jane Craighead George, and *Night of the Twisters* by Ivy Ruckman, in use in elementary classrooms and available in school libraries, for profanity, the mention of ghosts, and a reference to an attempted rape. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following reconsideration by a school review committee, the school media committee and the county media committee, *Bridge to Terabithia* was retained both for classroom use and in the libraries, but was restricted to middle school classrooms. Following review by the school review committee, *Stepping on the Cracks* and *Wait till Helen Comes* were retained for use as read-aloud books in the classroom and continue to be available in the elementary school library. Following review by the school review committee and the school media committee, *James and the Giant Peach* was retained for use in the classroom and in the school library. Following review by the school review committee and the school media committee, *Julie of the Wolves* was retained in the library and may be used in the classroom only if the teacher reads the book aloud and edits out the "objectionable" scenes. Following review by the school review committee, *Night of the Twisters* was retained in the school library and for classroom use.

The objector was not pleased with these modifications and drafted a letter demanding that the selection policy be changed to discourage the use of books containing profanity. The existing policy was not changed.

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INCIDENT: In Dacula, objections to *A Little Love* by Virginia Hamilton, available in a middle school library, for allegedly promoting premarital sex. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to require parental permission of students wishing to borrow the book.

INCIDENT: In Fulton County, objections to a supplementary textbook, *Human Sexuality*, in use in high school health education classes, for being "a how-to book" and for being too graphic. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board overruled a curriculum committee's unanimous recommendation to continue using the text, agreeing with the objector that it does not stress abstinence strongly enough and contains information about topics such as contraceptives and masturbation. The board also cited concerns that the text contains outdated information about AIDS. The school system is not scheduled to purchase new sex education textbooks for another two years. Currently, only supplemental materials are in use.

The text had been challenged once before but had been supported by the school board at that time. Teachers are now forbidden to use it as a resource or to let students use it. A member of the textbook review committee stated, "There are students in the school district who need the information [in the book], and we didn't think it was fair to take that away from them." State law mandates sexuality and HIV education.

INCIDENT: In Lawrenceville, objections to *Are You Alone in the House* by Richard Peck, available in a middle school library, for portrayals of teen promiscuity and rape. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to require written parental permission of students wishing to borrow the book.

INCIDENT: In Lilburn, objections to *Agnes the Sheep* by William Taylor, available in an elementary school library, for use of "hell" and "damn." Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to remove the book from the school library and offer it to the middle school library.

INCIDENT: In Lilburn, objections to *Dinosaurs Divorce* by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly upsetting subject matter. Restricted access requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The board of education voted unanimously to uphold the recommendations of a local media committee and a district committee to retain the book without restriction. The objector requested that kindergartners through second-graders be allowed to view the book only with a school counselor or with supervision from another adult. The book is designed to help elementary-age students to better understand divorce, and according to a school official, "We felt it was in the best interests of the students to leave it on the shelf....It's a very well-recommended book."

INCIDENT: In Loganville, objections to *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, available in a high school library and in use in a tenth-grade English class, for being "laced with vulgarities and profanities." After thumbing through the 1937 classic, the objector, who did not read the book, proclaimed, "Twenty-four times 'G.D' is used. In other forms, it's used 45 times. In 104 pages, I think, there are 108 profane words other than 'G.D', or God's name used in vain."

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the book in the library and to continue its use in the classroom. The objector insisted, "Censorship never entered my mind. I care about other kids. My first response was protection. I don't want *anyone* reading this, but especially children."

INCIDENT: In Marietta, objections to *H.I.V.*, a poem written by a middle school student to address the persecution of people with AIDS and submitted to the school's literary journal, for using the words "queers" and "dykes" to illustrate her point. The school contended that those two words are the equivalent of profanities and cannot be printed in a student publication. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Assistant principal.

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RESOLUTION: The assistant principal refused to allow the poem to be printed in the school's literary journal because the offending words are incompatible with the conservative tone of the town, a town that has received a great deal of publicity for its anti-gay resolutions. According to her mother, the student refused to remove the words from the poem because doing so would "take the emotional power out of it." Responding to the administrator's actions, the student said, "It's definitely homophobic. It's East Cobb and their values. Their values are amazing. They say it's a Christian thing. Well, the Christian thing says you should love everyone."

The student's poem was ultimately printed in the local paper with an article about the controversy. Since then, the student and her family have been the victims of threats and harassing phone calls. To protect themselves, the girl's single mother withdrew her two children from the school and is home-schooling them.

INCIDENT: In Oconee County, objections to *In Country* by Bobbie Ann Mason, available in a high school library, for profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A media review committee voted to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Oconee County, the board of education voted unanimously to rescind two controversial motions passed at a previous meeting that would have required the evaluation of 40,000 school library books, and removal of any books containing "explicit sex and/or pornography." The motions also required the screening of all incoming books to ensure that no books with "explicit sex or pornography be allowed in our school system." The motions had been passed in the wake of a controversy in which eight books by V.C. Andrews were removed during the 1993-94 school year. The board also requested that the media policy be reviewed and revised, and a new policy has since been approved by the board in an unanimous vote. Once a formal complaint has been filed and reviewed by a school media committee, appeals are heard by a system-wide media committee, the superintendent, and finally, the board of education. Challenged books are pulled from the library shelf until the media policy process has been completed. One opponent of the policy stated, "I don't agree with pulling books off the shelves even if they are challenged. They can be put in a restricted area."

In another action related to the V.C. Andrews controversy, the board of education passed a resolution that encourages the administration to reinforce the teaching of "traditional moral values such as determining right from wrong, honesty, integrity, accountability, self-discipline, sexual abstinence, self-restraint, sincerity, loyalty, love of country and respect for and value of human life and property." The resolution was introduced by the board of education member who had previously proposed the two motions to ban all books with "explicit sex and/or pornography" and an earlier proposal to ban all books containing profanity. This same

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board member has defined "traditional moral values" as "one man and one woman, and they get married. It's not one woman and one woman or one man and one man." An opponent of the resolution claimed, "When you start talking about traditional family values and traditional moral values, what you're really talking about is an agenda that's being pushed by the political and religious right."

INCIDENT: In Oconee County, objections to *What We Must See*, an anthology of short stories by black authors edited by Orde Coombs, available in a high school library, for profanity and alleged inappropriate content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: As this report went to press, a media review committee's decision was still pending. Said the objector, "in our society, this is unacceptable literature due to its profanity and content, and that it is educationally unsuitable unless our society is going to change to the ghettos."

INCIDENT: In Oconee County, objections to eight books by V.C. Andrews, including *Heaven, If There Be Thorns, Web of Dreams, Secrets in the Morning, Midnight Whispers, Gates of Paradise, Fallen Hearts*, and *Garden of Shadows*, available in a high school library, in a continuation of a previous controversy over nine books by the same author, due to allegations that they contained "incestuous relationships," "aggressive sexual behavior (rape)" and "encouragement of sexual activity." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Director of Curriculum.

RESOLUTION: Following objections from a parent and community members during the 1993-94 school year to nine books by V.C. Andrews available in a high school library, including *Dark Angel, Darkest Hour, Dawn, Flowers in the Attic, My Sweet Audrina, Petals on the Wind, Garden of Shadows, Seeds of Yesterday*, and *Twilight's Child*, a system-wide media review committee voted to remove eight of the books. The board of education voted 3-1 to uphold the recommendation of the superintendent and a system-wide media review committee to retain *Garden of Shadows* in a restricted area. Only students with written parental permission have access to the book.

The objector in that incident appealed that decision, stating "We're not pleased, but that's their decision. There's seven more V.C. Andrews books in the library...we didn't get them all." In the 1994-95 school year, the director of curriculum initiated the challenge to the remaining seven books by V.C. Andrews in the high school library. "It seemed like the logical thing for us to do since the

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system-wide media committee voted to remove eight of the nine books by the same author," she said. In accordance with district policy, the books have been pulled from the library shelves until the review process has been completed. As this report went to press, a school media committee recommendation was pending.

INCIDENT: In Snellville, objections to *Being Born* by Sheila Kitzinger, available in an elementary school library, for an allegedly graphic depiction of childbirth. Removal and/or placement of book in middle school requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to make the book available to teachers and parents only.

INCIDENT: In Snellville, objections to *Shoplifting* by L.B. Taylor, Jr., available in a middle school library, for allegedly encouraging theft. Removal and/or restriction requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to require parental permission of students wishing to borrow the book.

INCIDENT: In Trion, objections to *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in a library for fourth-grade and older students, for allegedly teaching children satanic worship. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The book was retained in the library after a complaint was filed in accordance with school policy.

INCIDENT: In Wilkes County, objections to the film *El Norte*, requested for use in first- and second-year Spanish classes by a teacher, for containing profanity.

OBJECTOR: Superintendent.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to uphold a superintendent's order that the teacher not show the film.

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INCIDENT: In Georgia, objections to *The Potato Kid* by Barbara Corcoran, available in an elementary school library, for a single instance of profanity, reference to a child porn star, and a crack addict. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A media review committee voted unanimously to retain the book. Shortly after a formal complaint was filed, the superintendent had suggested that the book be taken off the shelf. A school employee responded, "we have a policy, and we can not start taking books off shelves for that reason."

HAWAII

STATE OVERVIEW

No challenges to instructional materials were reported during the 1994-95 school year.

IDAHO

STATE OVERVIEW

R-rated and PG-13-rated films were the subject of controversy in one school district. In Boise, a student objected to *Running Loose*. In Meridian, school board members removed a textbook from the proposed adoption list because it was allegedly "too liberal."

INCIDENT: In Boise, objections to *Running Loose* by Chris Crutcher, in use in a ninth-grade English class and available in the library, for objectionable language and general sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Student.

RESOLUTION: A review committee comprising students, parents, teachers and administrators voted unanimously to retain the book as long as alternative reading remains available in class. The librarian credited a strong reconsideration policy and the makeup of the committee for the decision and described the two student representatives as the most eloquent defenders of the book.

INCIDENT: In Idaho, a school district revised its film-use policy to ban from use any R-rated film that is not edited for classroom viewing and to require even high school students to get parental permission to watch PG-13 films and edited R-rated films in class.

IDAHO

A group of high school teachers is protesting the new policy, noting in a letter to the Board of Trustees of the school district that "All of our students are over the age of 13; most seniors are, in fact, 18 by year's end, and therefore old enough to vote and marry without permission. It puts us in a somewhat awkward position, as educators, to require of those students parent permission to view a PG-13 film." The teachers are currently working with the board in an effort to revise the policy regarding PG-13 films.

The new policy was instituted following the showing of an R-rated film in an eleventh-grade United States history class during the 1993-94 school year. A complaint was filed at that time by parents requesting a ban on all R-rated movies. No complaint was made about PG-13 movies.

INCIDENT: In Meridian, objections to *The United States and Its People, America: Pathways to the Present*, and *Magruder's American Government*, under consideration for adoption in high school history and government classes, for allegedly being "too liberal." Specifically, board members objected to the amount of history of minority groups, the inclusion of the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, and an essay on the increasing role of women in government. Rejection of textbooks requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: The school board pulled the books from the list of texts to be considered for adoption. Said one parent who supported the use of the textbooks, "Our students must be prepared for the real world....[w]e need to remember that the rest of the world does not look like the Meridian School District."

ILLINOIS

STATE OVERVIEW

A tuition voucher bill was introduced in the state legislature that would allow parents to use public education funds to send their children to private and religious schools. In Williamsville, a principal removed *Southern Fried Rat* from a middle school library to avoid "hard feelings" of the objector. In Schaumberg, Halloween activities were canceled at an elementary school after parents and school officials complained that the celebrations disrupted learning and glorified the occult. In Oak Park, a Depression-era mural on display in an elementary school was removed and relocated after parents complained that its depiction of various ethnic groups was outdated and racist.

INCIDENT: In Cary, objections to *Circle Unbroken* by Sollace Hotze, and *The Foxman* by Gary Paulsen, available in a middle school library, for sexual content. Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to retain the novels in the library's collection. The objector appealed to the school board, which upheld the committee's decision.

INCIDENT: In Oak Park, objections to *People of the World* by Mildred Waltrip, a Depression-era mural on display in an elementary school corridor, for containing depictions of the world's ethnic groups that were allegedly racist, outdated, and inappropriate. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: After much controversy, the school board voted unanimously to remove *People of the World* and three accompanying murals, but to preserve and relocate them to another site in Oak Park. The district will devise a plan to remove, relocate, and preserve the murals while retaining the history of the debate and using it as a teaching tool for students. The board specified that the future site of the murals may be in another public school, but that it must be accessible "by choice."

The controversy began when the murals were covered for many weeks following a parent's complaint to the superintendent. The board eventually based its decision on the recommendation of the multicultural committee to remove the mural, and on input from school board meetings and small discussion groups that were formed to resolve the issue. Said one school board member, "I want to disperse any negative stereotypes that cause pain or agony....It is not censorship when you remove something hurtful." A former school board member disagreed, saying: "[W]e can not, must not, give in to the easy fix of censoring our artistic heritage and removing the murals."

INCIDENT: In Schaumburg, objections to Halloween activities in an elementary school for the alleged potential to disrupt learning and conflict with some students' religious beliefs. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School officials and parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board upheld a school leadership committee's decision to discontinue the Halloween party and parade this school year. According to the superintendent, schools in the district cannot have more than three parties a year, and each school has discretion to choose which events to celebrate. In a letter informing parents of the decision, the principal said that in the past students had violated the "no make-up" rules and other costume guidelines, and that the celebrations took up too much classroom instruction time.

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One parent who supported the decision stated, "As a Christian I think the Lord wants us to be concerned with loving others and I think the whole holiday of Halloween is involved in scaring others and evilness. I think that the kids see it so often...I think they slowly become desensitized to the occult." Other parents were not happy with the decision and 100 names were collected on a petition to reinstate the party and parade. In addition, a parent-run party was held in the school gym on Halloween night.

Four other elementary schools in this school district have followed suit and modified their Halloween celebrations. Three schools allowed students K-3 to wear costumes for only half of the school day, while older students marked the occasion with quiz show games. The other school allowed small class parties, but students could not dress up in costume until an evening parent-run Halloween party in the school gym. Parent protest was highly critical of these decisions, as one objector claimed, "I submit to you that there is a lot of learning going on, not book or desk work which can be done any day of the year, but the learning that comes only from the imagination."

INCIDENT: In Williamsville, objections to *Southern Fried Rat* by Daniel Cohen, available in a junior high school library, for a situation in which a man contemplates adultery. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent who also teaches in the district.

RESOLUTION: The principal pulled the book to avoid "hard feelings." The district has no formal reconsideration policy; however, in response to this challenge, a policy is currently being drafted.

INCIDENT: In Illinois, a tuition voucher bill was introduced that would allow parents to use public funds to send their children to private and religious schools. Opponents of this legislation raise questions about the constitutionality of using public funds for religious purposes, as well as the advisability of further draining resources for public education. Opponents assert that the bill clearly violates the state constitution, which forbids the General Assembly from "mak[ing] any appropriation or pay[ing] from any public fund whatever, anything in aid of any church or sectarian purpose." The bill has been assigned to the House Rules Committee.

INDIANA

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Ryan White: My Own Story **was removed from sixth-grade classrooms after parents complained that the book's epilogue refers to safe sex and condom use and its resource list includes the address and telephone number for a gay man's health organization in New York. In Indianapolis, a superintendent withheld an entire edition of a student newspaper because**

it contained an "inflammatory" article written by an African American student and a few weeks later, the principal censored a feature article about two gay students because he feared it might "incite" trouble. In Yorktown, parents objected to the use of the film *Excalibur* in a tenth-grade English class, charging that it is a "gateway to pornography." "The White Circle "by John B. Clayton will no longer be used in a seventh-grade reading class because it contains the phrases "go to hell" and "son of a bitch."

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INCIDENT: In Carmel, objections to *Journey of the Sparrows* by Fran Leeper Buss, in use in a sixth-grade social studies class and available in a middle school library, for profanity and depicting illegal immigration. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted unanimously to retain the book. The award-winning novel depicts the flight of illegal aliens from El Salvador and their struggle to survive in Chicago and contains realistic language and an allusion to rape. The objector, who disliked the theme of illegal immigration, said, "Illegal is not OK." The media specialist felt that the theme was highly appropriate as it provided an opportunity to teach about something that is an issue in that area. Upon hearing of the challenge Buss said, "I feel children deserve honesty, and they deserve honest scholarship."

INCIDENT: In Columbus, objections to *Seasons of Sexuality*, a sex education video, in use in fifth- and sixth-grade health class, for content that is "too suggestive and graphic." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted 7-0 to retain the video while searching for more updated material, and to allow ample time for parental preview of curricular materials prior to classroom use. Parents are given the opportunity to view sex education materials before classroom instruction begins to determine if they would like to opt their children out of an activity. The objectors decided to opt their child out, but also filed a formal complaint to have the video removed. The review committee found the 1980 video dated but decided to retain it. A study group composed of sixth-grade teachers has been appointed to locate a more up-to-date videotape.

INCIDENT: In Connersville, objections to a Planned Parenthood advertisement in the high school newspaper, *The Clarion*, for allegedly promoting "special interest or political advertising." The objector stated, "If we did allow the Planned Parenthood advertisement, would we be saying Planned Parenthood can resolve the [teen pregnancy] issue? The question is, what has happened to our values and responsibilities?" Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The school board agreed with the principal's decision not to allow the Planned Parenthood ad to run and to ban all advertising in the student newspaper. For the past three years, the newspaper has used advertisements to supplement the cost of printing more pictures in the paper. According to the principal, "That was the only reason I allowed advertising. Otherwise, I would never have allowed it at all." Prior to this incident, the principal had effected a ban on advertising from Planned Parenthood, Right to Life, or local political candidates in the newspaper.

Students were told that school funds for *The Clarion* were no longer available, and the school's copy machine would replace commercial printing of the newspaper. The principal later compromised to permit the newspaper to be printed commercially, but maintained the ban on advertisements. A health professional addressed the school board on the urgency for community leaders to prevent teenage pregnancy by providing birth control information to sexually active teens. "I don't think it's responsible of us as adults to censor," she stated.

INCIDENT: In Duneland, objections to *The Wizard in the Tree* by Lloyd Alexander, available in an elementary school library, for containing the words "slut" and "damn." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to retain the book in the school libraries. The committee declared that they would not remove an entire book because it contained two offensive words.

INCIDENT: In Indianapolis, objections to *The Pike Hi-Life*, a high school student newspaper, for containing "inflammatory language." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Superintendent and principal.

RESOLUTION: An entire press run of an April edition of *The Pike Hi-Life* was confiscated by school administrators because it contained an article by an African American senior critical of the behavior of other African American students. The superintendent withheld distribution of *The Pike Hi-Life*, fearing the article was racially volatile and might cause unrest among students. The principal, who acknowledged that the journalism teacher was "torn between freedom of speech issues and the understanding that the principal has the right to pull [the newspaper]," overruled the authority of the teacher and pulled the publication insisting that it was "no big deal" and "a mountain made out of a molehill."

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INCIDENT: In Indianapolis, objections to an article about gay students written by a senior for the school newspaper, *The Pike Hi-Life*, because its controversial content might "incite" trouble. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The principal removed the article from the student publication saying that "[t]he timing is wrong on the wings of the other particular problem," referring to the confiscation of more than 1,700 copies of the school newspaper a month before because it contained an article the superintendent thought would create racial tensions.

The principal asserts that the student chose not to print the article after she "consulted" him about whether or not he thought the article would be inflammatory. The student, however, contends that the feature article was withheld by the principal as the newspaper was scheduled to go to press. Said the student, "The whole message is that being homosexual doesn't make [gay students] weird."

Following the first incident, the principal issued a memo instructing the faculty not to speak to the press, and said that teachers were "relieved" to have a policy for dealing with the press put in writing. But local papers received numerous phone calls from teachers complaining about the policy and saying they were afraid to have their names published for fear of disciplinary action.

INCIDENT: In Muncie, objections to *Forever* by Judy Blume, available in a high school library, for its alleged sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the title and recommended to the school board that it be placed back on the library's shelf without restrictions. The school board voted to retain the popular adolescent novel, but insisted that it be placed in a restricted area, requiring students to obtain parental permission in order to read the book. The school librarian, a 20-year veteran of the school system, expressed dismay at the board's decision, acknowledging that this arrangement "creates more problems than it solves." The parent who lodged the complaint against *Forever* lodged a complaint last year against *Ordinary People* by Judith Guest, resulting in the book's removal from the tenth-grade curriculum and placement in the eleventh- and twelfth-grade curriculum. Said the librarian, "The administration seems to think that if it gives in, the problem will go away. But as you can see the problem doesn't go away, it only gets worse."

INCIDENT: In Rensselaer, objections to *Ryan White: My Own Story* by Ryan White and Ann Marie Cunningham, to be used in sixth-grade science and English classes, for an epilogue referring to safe sex and condom use. "'Safe sex' is not

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safe," said one objector. "The only completely safe sex is abstinence: total abstinence." Objectors also took issue with a resource list that includes the address and telephone numbers of a gay men's health organization in New York. "What if a child calls?" asked an objector. "What's to stop them from selling [the child's] name to a mailing list?" Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to remove the book from the classrooms.

The book was initially adopted by the school board by a 4-3 vote. More than 100 residents protested the decision, leading the district's AIDS curriculum committee to withdraw support of the book. As a result, the school board revisited the issue, voting to remove the book. Said one board member who reversed his vote, "The book has lost its effectiveness. The teachers wouldn't have used it anyway."

INCIDENT: In Syracuse, objections to "The White Circle" by John B. Clayton, a story in use in a seventh-grade Advanced Reading class, on the grounds that it contains the phrases "go to hell" and "son of a bitch." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The story will no longer be used in the class. Following a verbal complaint by the objector, the principal and the director of the advanced studies curriculum recommended to the teacher that an "inoffensive" story be used in the future. Since there is no formal reconsideration policy, no formal complaint was necessary to remove the story from the curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Yorktown, a challenge to the film *Excalibur,* in use in a tenth-grade English class, on the grounds that it is a "gateway to pornography." Removal and/or editing requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The film remains in use unedited. According to district policy, parents are notified ahead of time of "controversial materials" to be used in class, and they can formally request that their own children receive an alternative assignment. The objectors in this case complained to the principal and the superintendent, who repeated the policy to them.

The parents may appeal to the school board, but the board has already stated it will stand by its policy. The parents have also indicated they want all R-rated films banned from the schools.

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In Waukee, challengers assisted by Concerned Women for America and using materials from Focus on the Family objected to writing a grant proposal for Goals 2000 funding, declaring that the program would promote "politically correct" values and introduce "homosexual instruction" to the public school system. In Des Moines, a proposal to add sexual orientation issues to the previously adopted multicultural, non-sexist curriculum was rejected following a flood of protest from right-wing activists and some parents and community members. Other materials challenged include *The Amazing Fact Book of Weapons, The Lottery, The Veldt, Burt and Barney, Graveyard Moon, Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies.*

INCIDENT: In Burlington, objections to the content of a school newspaper, *The Purple and Gray*, for allegedly invoking gang imagery, being "negative against school," and showing poor judgment. The objectors were particularly opposed to a picture of the sign language symbol for "I love you," an editorial criticizing the effectiveness of the school's Drug Awareness and Resistance Education program, and an article opposing the limiting of senior privileges by school officials. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal and journalism advisor.

RESOLUTION: In a violation of Iowa state law and district policy, the principal and journalism advisor refused to print the symbol and pulled the editorial and the article, even though none of the pieces qualified as obscene, libelous or slanderous and none encouraged students to commit unlawful acts or to violate school regulations. Despite the existence of a school policy that requires that students be informed of the appeal procedure in case they disagree with an administrative judgment, neither the principal nor the advisor informed the students of their rights or of the deletions before the newspaper went to press. The students learned of their rights only after a local paper printed a story on the censorship of the student newspaper. Said one student, "I don't have a problem with him looking at the material. But he does not have the right to pull it out just because he doesn't like it....My hopes are that people realize there is a law. We hope our rights are going to be respected."

While both students said they resented the lack of discussion and felt they were shown little respect, they saw positive aspects of the experience. One student, who was not selected by a board of teachers and the principal to be the editor next year despite impressive credentials, took a job at the local paper where her first story landed on the front page.

INCIDENT: In Cedar Rapids, objections to *The Amazing Fact Book of Weapons*, by Alison Leach, available in elementary school libraries, for containing allegedly dangerous subject matter that is inappropriate for children. Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation that the book be removed from the district's kindergartens but retained in all elementary school libraries.

INCIDENT: In Cedar Rapids, objections to *Burt and Barney* by Ted Delaney, available in an elementary school library, for containing "name-calling." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation to retain the children's book in the elementary school media collection.

INCIDENT: In Cedar Rapids, objections to *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite and *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newman, available in an elementary school library, for lesbian and gay themes. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation to reshelve the books in the Family Section of the library where children would be less likely to find them.

Initially, the books were removed from the library by the principal. While he was instructed to submit a reconsideration request form, he never did. The librarian, who did not want the books to be removed without a formal review, filled out the forms.

INCIDENT: In Cedar Rapids, objections to *Graveyard Moon* by Carol Gorman, read by a second-grade class in preparation for a visit from the author, for allegedly being terrifying and containing references to drinking alcohol. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation that the book be retained in elementary libraries and as a classroom resource, on the grounds that the "teenagers, especially the main character, exercise good judgement and resistance to peer pressure." The objector appealed the decision and a panel of library science specialists upheld the initial recommendation.

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INCIDENT: In Cedar Rapids, objections to "The Lottery," a short story by Shirley Jackson, and *The Veldt*, a short film based on the book by Ray Bradbury, in use in an eighth-grade English class, for allegedly being too violent. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld the review committee's recommendation to retain both the story and the film as educational resources in the eighth-grade curriculum, noting that the materials "were being used in an appropriate manner."

INCIDENT: In Des Moines, objections to a proposal to "infuse sexual orientation issues" into the previously adopted multicultural curriculum, on the grounds that it would "promote homosexuality." Rejection of proposal requested.

OBJECTOR: Anti-gay activist Bill Horn from national Religious Right group The Report, conservative radio talk-show host Jan Mickelson, parents, community members and some clergy.

RESOLUTION: The school board unanimously accepted the recommendations of the superintendent to reject the proposal but to provide counseling for students struggling with sexual orientation issues, and to emphasize the need for support for at-risk students, including gay and lesbian teens.

In 1990, a unanimous Des Moines School Board added "sexual orientation" to the district's nondiscrimination policy. An advisory committee was convened to develop guidelines for effective implementation of sexual orientation nondiscrimination. Their draft proposal, submitted in fall of 1994, included the goals of providing historical information on gay/lesbian/bisexual individuals' contributions, and increasing student awareness of the negative impact of homophobia, particularly on teenagers.

While initially supported by all seven school board members, the draft came under immediate attack by right-wing activists and some parents and community members. Conservative radio talk-show host Jan Mickelson spent a week talking about it on his show, joined by Bill Horn, spokesman for the national Religious Right group The Report, and co-producer of the anti-gay videotape "The Gay Agenda."

The proposal ignited a firestorm of letters to the local paper, public statements, church sermons, and community meetings. One Baptist minister, speaking against the proposal during a sermon at his church, argued that "when you present information about the contributions of famous gay, lesbian and bisexual people, you are promoting." In contrast, a minister from a Congregational church favored the proposal: "I'd rather have my daughter learn about homosexuality from class than from the jokes she hears on the playground." Thirty Des Moines

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clergy members signed a statement neither for nor against the specific proposal but generally in support of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students and curriculum: "We believe that homosexuality should neither be promoted nor condemned in schools; however, it also shouldn't be ignored. To the extent that homosexuality is a factor in people's lives, in history, in the arts, in politics, and in relationships, it should be presented realistically and honestly as part of the way the world is."

The night before the school board's public forum on the issue, 3,000 people turned out for a widely publicized church meeting led by Jan Mickelson and area clergy opposed to the proposal. Fifteen hundred people showed up at the school board meeting the following evening, and more than 100 signed up to speak. One grandparent warned, "You get [the proposal] out or we close the schools down." A mother of two disagreed: "I would no more expect the schools to exclude information on the Stonewall Riot as I would about the race riots of the '60s."

The superintendent recommended to the board, and it agreed, that the proposal be rejected, that the Sexual Orientation Advisory Committee be dissolved, and that new members be added to the School Board Advisory Committee and the Educational Equity Committee so that those committees can study how sexual orientation is currently addressed.

At the same board meeting, a 12-year member of the board, and a respected community member, came out publicly as a gay man, stating, "The negative things that have been said in recent weeks about gay people—the awful stereotypes—are lies. I know because I am a gay person." He had been the target of threats of violence as rumors persisted about his homosexuality.

Gay-rights advocates and other community members were pleased with the superintendent's emphasis on nondiscrimination against gay and lesbian students and their right to a safe school environment. One activist viewed the decision as "a solid promise of a long-term victory here because of the way the community is coming together to support the school district's nondiscrimination policy."

Bill Horn praised the superintendent's decision, but had also indicated earlier that he would not be finished when this issue was resolved. "We're putting out a fire. When this is over, we're going to build a fire department."

INCIDENT: In Eddyville, objections to *Ring of Truth* by Susan Beth Pfeffer and *Detour for Emmy* by Marilyn Reynolds, available in a combined junior and senior high school library. The objector cited objectionable language, promiscuity and other sexual content in *Ring of Truth*, and abortion, promiscuity, guided imagery and the degradation of moral character in *Detour for Emmy*. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain both books in the library. Committee members felt that *Ring of Truth* was age-appropriate and reflective of society at large and that *Detour for Emmy* was well-written and dealt with the issue of teen pregnancy in a responsible manner.

INCIDENT: In Marshalltown, objections to *Bridge to Teribithia* by Katherine Paterson, in use in a fifth-grade literature class, for profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: After the objector filed a formal complaint, a review committee was formed and a hearing was scheduled to evaluate the educational merits of the book. The objector failed to attend the hearing and has not lodged further complaints. The book was not withdrawn from the curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Marshalltown, objections to *Squabbles* by Stephen Cosgrove, available in an elementary school library, for discussing child abuse. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to remove the book from elementary libraries throughout the district. School officials claim that the book was removed because it is "poorly written," not because it exposes children to child abuse.

INCIDENT: In Urbandale, objections to *The Internet Yellow Pages*, a directory compiled by Harley Hahn and Rick Stout, available in the reference section of a middle school library, for containing electronic addresses to access pornographic materials and instructions on how to build explosives. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: Seven of the eight members of the review committee voted to retain the book as a useful information resource, with one abstaining member arguing that only the offensive sections of the directory should be removed. The superintendent's decision to accept or reject the committee's recommendation was not available at the time this report went to press.

INCIDENT: In Waukee, objections to Goals 2000, a federal funding program for school reform, for allegedly focusing on "Behavior Modification" and "politically correct" values. In a letter announcing an organizing meeting, Concerned Women for America warned of "the possibility of Homosexual instruction in

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Waukee schools," and called Goals 2000 an "experimental program" that would "take time away from academics such as reading, writing, and arithmetic." The objectors requested that the district not write a proposal for Goals 2000 funding.

OBJECTOR: Parents with assistance from Concerned Women for America and using material from Focus on the Family.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 5-0 to accept a task force's 5-2 recommendation to write a grant proposal for Goals 2000 funding. The district formed the task force, made up of one teacher, four members from building advisory committees, and two objectors to Goals 2000, in response to the objections.

INCIDENT: In Wayland, objections to *Running Loose* by Chris Crutcher, in use in an eighth-grade English class, for "sexual vulgarity" and "profanity," for including "inappropriate sexual scenes for children this age," and for stating "Sex is a scary thing." Removal from eighth-grade classroom and restriction of the book to older students requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents, one of whom was a school board member.

RESOLUTION: In apparent violation of the district review policy the school principal ordered the book removed from use after two complaints. Subsequently, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the book with no formal restrictions on its use in either the classroom or the school library. One objector had asked, "Why present it in the classroom when they can't say it in the halls?" and requested removal of the book from the classroom and the junior/senior high school library. Despite the committee vote, the book has not been used since. At the end of the school year, the contract of the English teacher who had used the book was not renewed.

KANSAS

STATE OVERVIEW

In the Kansas state legislature, tuition voucher proposals that would allow public money to be used for private, religious schools have been introduced and a so-called "abstinence bill" has been defeated. A school board in Galena voted to retain John Steinbeck's classic *Of Mice and Men.* Two books were restricted in a high school library as a result of informal complaints in Chanute.

INCIDENT: In Chanute, objections to *Annie On My Mind* by Nancy Garden, available in a high school library, on the grounds that it is about lesbianism. Restriction requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: Though no formal complaint was filed against the book, the principal placed it on reserve in the library and required students to have parental permission to read it. No students requested the book, and it was returned to the library shelf.

INCIDENT: In Chanute, objections to *Pthor* by Piers Anthony, available in a high school library, for sexual content. Restriction requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The principal directed the school librarian to place the book on reserve, although no formal complaint was filed against it. Students are now required to have parental permission to read it.

INCIDENT: In Derby, objections to *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline Cooney, available in an elementary school library, for sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to retain the book on elementary library shelves.

INCIDENT: In Derby, objections to *Through the Hidden Door* by Rosemary Wells, available in an elementary school library, for containing profanity. Said the objector, "I am against bad language for people of any age, unrealistic though that may be. Bad language only tears down a person, it does not build them up." Reevaluation of material requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to move the book to junior and senior high school libraries citing a passage where boys beat up a dog as being more appropriate for older children.

INCIDENT: In Galena, objections to *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, available in a high school library, for objectionable language and social implications. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee recommended that the book be retained, and the school board voted unanimously to accept that recommendation. The review committee had noted that possession of a book does not necessarily mean an

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endorsement of the values and ideas in that book, and also pointed out that the book may promote critical thinking.

INCIDENT: In Harper County, objections to *Read* magazine, in use in middle school classrooms, for allegedly containing "strong messages of VIOLENCE, DEATH, MURDER and SUICIDE" that contribute to an "'unhealthy' education." Removal from the required reading list requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain *Read* magazine as a classroom resource to be used at the teacher's discretion. The review committee reminded the parents that they have the right to opt their children out of any assignment that they feel is objectionable.

INCIDENT: In Marion County, objections to *All But Alice* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, available in a middle school library, for sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: After an informal complaint from a teacher, the librarian removed the book from the middle school collection and placed it in the high school collection. While the librarian acknowledged that the book is intended for fifth- and sixth-grade readers, she removed the book explaining that the school serves a "heavy Catholic area."

INCIDENT: In Marion County, objections to *Sports Illustrated* magazine's swimsuit edition, available in a high school library, for allegedly containing "nudity." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: Despite the existence of a formal policy to review challenged library materials, the principal simply instructed the librarian to remove the offending issue from the library shelf because he "didn't want it in the school."

INCIDENT: In Kansas, the state Board of Education voted to eliminate Outcome V of the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA), an outcome based education (OBE) program implemented in 1992. Outcome V concerned goals for students' "emotional and physical well-being" and their mastery of AIDS education and sex education. OBE and QPA have been under attack for years in Kansas by Citizens for Excellence in Education, Concerned Women for America, the Eagle

Forum, Kansas Education Watch Network, and other Religious Right groups, for allegedly undermining parental rights and traditional education and for allegedly teaching values instead of skills. QPA, sex education and AIDS education all became targets in the state legislature this year.

INCIDENT: In Kansas, legislators assisted by the Wichita-based Kansas Family Research Institute introduced a so-called "abstinence bill" regarding sex education and AIDS education in schools. The bill stated that "abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the expected standard for all school age children." Among other things, the bill would have forced teachers to notify parents at least 30 days prior to any AIDS prevention lessons and to meet with parents so they could preview the lessons. Teachers would also be required to present information only in the context of abstinence or marriage and to recite to students the state's sodomy law. A Kansas AIDS organization said the legislation would place an "undue" burden on teachers trying to present federally mandated HIV/AIDS information. In addition, the previewing requirements would force guest speakers to make two presentations to a school district. One AIDS organization pointed out that "This is particularly chilling for students in remote, rural school districts."

More than 27 representatives from pro-gay and lesbian rights organizations testified against the bill, and the House Education Committee responded by making the bill's provisions voluntary rather than mandatory. The bill successfully passed in the House but, after continued lobbying by pro-gay and lesbian rights organizations, the Senate Education Committee voted to take no further action on it. One organization stated that the bill "effectively chills the free exchange of ideas which the Constitution guarantees for everyone" and that it "exposes, at the core of the family values and home-schooling rhetoric, a remarkable fear of sexual realities, new ideas and communication between parents and children."

INCIDENT: In Kansas, a tuition voucher bill has been introduced in the legislature this session. Vouchers would allow parents to use public money to send their children to both non-sectarian and religious private schools. Opponents of the initiatives raise questions about the constitutionality of using public funds for religious purposes, as well as the wisdom of further draining public school resources. While supporters of voucher legislation assert that vouchers go to parents, not to religious institutions, a representative of the Kansas Association of School Boards observed that "[r]eligious schools are in the business of providing religious instruction. The proponents say the money isn't going to the religious schools, but to the parents. But what's the difference?"

INCIDENT: In Kansas, a Parental Rights Amendment was introduced in the state legislature that sought to ensure that the "rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." The House held public hearings, and an amended version of the bill passed the House Judiciary

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Committee. Though the initiative won the support of a majority in a House vote, it failed to receive the support of a two-thirds majority needed to pass an amendment to the state constitution.

Opponents voice concerns about both the validity and uses of such an amendment, noting that the Supreme Court has ruled that parental rights are already guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. Some voice concerns that the bill could put children at risk by weakening existing child labor laws and by obstructing the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases. Many have also expressed concern about the degree to which the proposed legislation would aid would-be censors by giving parents veto power over all library selections and classroom materials, giving one parent the ability to modify school curricula regardless of other parents' wishes.

KENTUCKY

STATE OVERVIEW

In Louisville, William Faulkner's classic novel *As I Lay Dying* faced a challenge for use of profanity and for a passage in which a character ponders the existence of God. *Halloween ABC* was removed from all Louisville elementary school libraries by the superintendent following a parent's complaint that the book introduced "children to Evilness and satanic themes."

INCIDENT: In Louisville, objections to *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner, in use in eleventh-grade English classes, for profanity, specifically the words "goddamn," "son of a bitch," and "bastard." The objector also cited a passage in which one character questions the existence of God. "That is very, very wrong," wrote the objector. "I spent years teaching my children that there is a God and what He is for." Removal and discipline of teacher requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a review committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the classic novel. No disciplinary action was taken against the teacher. A supporter of the book noted that *As I Lay Dying* is "a great work of literature." A committee member added that "one parent should not dictate what the children of others may read."

Upon hearing of the complaint, the school principal had directed the teacher to suspend use of the novel. The principal reversed his decision, however, when he was informed that such a move would be a violation of the district reconsideration policy.

KENTUCKY

INCIDENT: In Louisville, objections to *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam, available in elementary school libraries, for introducing "children to Evilness and satanic themes." "I believe this introduces these little elementary age children to bad dreams, scary thoughts and Satan," wrote the objector. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation to remove *Halloween ABC* from all 30 district elementary school libraries. A committee member felt that the book has "an overtone of evil."

INCIDENT: In Oldham County, objections to *Ordinary People* by Judith Guest, in use in a twelfth-grade English class, for containing allegedly blasphemous language such as "goddamn" and "chrissakes." The objector also claimed that the book violated district policy regarding separation of church and state by referring to God and Christ. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Upon appeal, a newly established site-based review council stood by its unanimous decision to retain the book. A district review committee had previously decided to retain the book. The objector appealed to the school board, who determined that the council had followed proper procedures. Said one high school student, "If they take out every book that offends somebody, there won't be any books left in the library."

INCIDENT: The Kentucky Education Department's "Character Education," a values education guide distributed to but not required for use among public schools across the state, was revised to de-emphasize themes such as "tolerance," in part because some members of the task force believed the term (tolerance) implies that children should be taught to accept homosexuality. The revised guide also emphasizes "citizenship" rather than "democracy," because citizenship allows children to be taught to respect authority that is not democratic, such as authority at home and in church. Other changes include changing the phrase "pride in self" to "respect for self." As one task force member who works for the Family Foundation noted, "pride is one of the seven deadly sins."

The original curriculum guide was written in 1989 by a 23-member committee composed of teachers, school administrators, PTA and teachers' union representatives, a state police trooper, a state legislator, a county attorney and a member of a conservative organization. The new task force had 21 members, eleven of whom are employed by churches. Two other members are associated with the Family Foundation, a right-wing nonprofit organization.

Several members of the new task force noted that they missed meetings at which changes were discussed. One such member said she did not know the task force had decided to drop tolerance and that she did not approve of the decision.

LOUISIANA

STATE OVERVIEW

Louisiana, the home of the landmark decision barring laws requiring the teaching of Creationism, *Edwards v. Aguillard*, saw renewed pressure to teach Creationism in science classes in Livingston. Other challenged materials included Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by Christopher and James Lincoln Collier.

INCIDENT: In Baton Rouge, objections to *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, on the summer reading list for an eleventh-grade English class, for sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a complaint from a parent, district administrators told the teacher to remove the book from the list. The objector had expressed the view that students today are not experiencing the same issues that are raised in the book, such as racism, incest, and peer pressure.

INCIDENT: In Laplace, objections to *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by Christopher and James Lincoln Collier, in use in a seventh-grade language arts class, for profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld the review committee's recommendation to retain the book as a classroom reader and as a library resource. The committee acknowledged that in his attempt to remove the book from the school curriculum and collection, the objector was trying to impose his religious views on the entire student body. While the objector orally challenged the superintendent's decision, he never filed a formal appeal.

INCIDENT: In Livingston Parish, a science curriculum committee allowed the Origins Resource Association, a group objecting to the teaching of evolution, to submit proposed lesson plans for use in science classes. At a later meeting, the committee will allow those for and against teaching Creationism to comment on the proposed lesson plans.

The school board had asked the curriculum committee to study the matter after receiving a petition signed by a school board member and other residents, asking that evolution not be taught as a "scientific fact." Said the petition, "We feel this to be a direct affront to our basic Christian beliefs as well as a scientifically unproved hypothesis." One parent opposing the introduction of Creationism urged the board not to be taken in by a "religious agenda under the subterfuge of science."

STATE OVERVIEW

MAINE

In Solon, state-approved educational guidelines were attacked by a small, organized group of residents. Materials challenged included *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, *Out of Control* by Norma Fox Mazer, and *Rolling Stone* magazine.

INCIDENT: In Bangor, objections to *Rolling Stone* magazine, available in a high school library, for allegedly encouraging students to participate in the various adult telephone services advertised in the back of the magazine. Expurgation of ads requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Upon becoming aware of the existence of 900 numbers in the back of *Rolling Stone* magazine, the objector filed a formal complaint requesting that the librarian at the high school blacken out the offending advertisements before putting each issue on the library shelf. A review committee was formed to discuss the implications of taking such action and voted to retain the magazine in its unedited form.

INCIDENT: In Caribou, objections to *Out of Control* by Norma Fox Mazer, available in a middle school library, for allegedly containing offensive language. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee was formed to examine and evaluate the content of the widely read young-adult novel. The committee voted to retain the title in the school library.

INCIDENT: In Solon, objections to Maine's Common Core of Learning, state-approved educational guidelines adopted by the school board and in place in an elementary school, for allegedly "dumbing down" the curriculum, for being outcome based education (OBE), and for undermining family values and authority. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Solon Citizens for Academic and Logical Education (SCALE), assisted by and using materials from Citizens for Excellence in Education, Eagle Forum, Rutherford Institute.

RESOLUTION: The school board decided after much controversy to survey parents in the district about whether they would prefer a more traditional educational pro-

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gram to the current program. A non-binding referendum earlier in the year showed a majority in Solon opposed to the Common Core of Learning. The results of the survey have not yet been announced.

The district's Common Core learning goals include interactive or cooperative learning, and a curriculum that is "responsive to the needs of students" and that will "help students and teachers make connections between learning and life." Although teachers have emphasized that the Maine Common Core of Learning is not necessarily OBE and that it is only one document among others that are used as guidelines for curriculum development, the goals of the Common Core have become the target of Maine anti-OBE activism. One objector stated, "Outcome-based education is educational anarchy guaranteeing only that your child is being bred as a worker bee for an elite ruling class who see themselves so superior that they alone are capable of governing the 'New World Order.'"

As a result of the controversy surrounding the Common Core of Learning and outcome based education, a committee was convened by the school board to address the community's concerns. The committee comprised school board members and administrators, faculty, parents on both sides of the issue, and an outside facilitator. Two representatives from SCALE were included but pulled out midway, claiming that they would "no longer be used as essential collaborators" in Maine's educational plan.

District sources state that 23 students have been pulled out of the elementary school for home-schooling or transferred to other schools; the principal resigned citing stress; and the teachers "have been harassed, criticized publicly, and kept in a general state of confusion and discouragement by a small group of parents."

INCIDENT: In South Portland, objections to *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, in use in an elementary school library, for allegedly R-rated content which might cause nightmares. The objector felt that the book, which is recommended for ages 9 and up, would be suitable for high school. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book. The committee considered the book itself, the Library Bill of Rights, and the school board selection policy in reaching its decision.

STATE OVERVIEW

MARYLAND

Maryland's public schools faced a broad range of attacks, including challenges to outcome based education in both Garrett and Harford counties. Among other materials challenged were *My Brother Sam Is Dead, Brave New World,* and Michael Willhoite's *Uncle What-Is-It Is Coming to Visit!!*

INCIDENT: In Annapolis, objections to *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, in use in a ninth-grade honors English class, for being about "mutating babies and sex." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: District supervisor.

RESOLUTION: Although the book had been approved for years, the objector claimed that the book was "unapproved" because of its content, but was unable to document that allegation. The teacher was told to follow an "in-house" approval process in which three other teachers must formally approve of the book's use. The teacher followed this procedure and continued to use the book without further interference.

INCIDENT: In Baltimore, objections to *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by Christopher and James Lincoln Collier, available as supplementary reading in a fifth-grade class, for profanity and graphic descriptions of war. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the Newbery Honor Book in the elementary school library media collection. The committee found it to be a tool that would help students "achieve an understanding of the historical events from which the American political system has evolved and to develop a sense of empathy for the past."

INCIDENT: In Clarksville, objections to *The Donkey's Dream* by Barbara Helen Berger, available in an elementary school library, for religious overtones and because of the author's endnote discussing the Christian symbolism in the book. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The associate superintendent upheld a review committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the book with the stipulation that *The Donkey's Dream* be correctly catalogued as a religious book.

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INCIDENT: In Elkton, objections to *Short Takes* and *The Short Prose Reader,* board-approved textbooks to be used in high school English classes, for allegedly "pushing a liberal point of view in the name of creative writing." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Local conservative group.

RESOLUTION: After the board approved the two English composition textbooks in a 3-1 vote, objectors challenged the adoption, claiming the texts contain "immoral" and "offensive" articles that reject Christianity. When the board refused to reconsider its decision, the board president announced his resignation in support of the objectors. A committee was then formed to review the entire textbook-selection process. Another committee was appointed to review the content of the stories and to locate supplementary materials that present a more conservative point of view to be read in conjunction with the texts. Some board members expressed concern about the effect of the controversy, and stated, "If you as parents give your children the moral foundation, you do not have to worry about what they will be exposed to in a textbook." Another commented on the damage caused by squelching controversial ideas: "I don't want a puppet (for a daughter); I don't want a clone. I want a thinking, intelligent, moral daughter." In response to the compromise, the founder of the group that led the opposition to the books said, "I hope we are on the road to recovery. But we haven't done anything about school prayer."

INCIDENT: In Ellicott City, objections to *Uncle What-Is-It Is Coming to Visit!!* by Michael Willhoite, available in an elementary school library, for alleged inappropriate subject matter pertaining to "gays." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The associate superintendent overturned a review committee's 9-1 vote to retain the book in the library. In a formal complaint, the parent objected to the use of the terms "fag," "queer uncle," "leather queen," depictions of transvestites and "leather gays," and a statement that "this lifestyle is all right." Although *Uncle What-Is-It Is Coming to Visit!!* is listed in the fifth edition of *Best Books for Children* for grades kindergarten through three and reviewed in the American Library Association's *Booklist,* the associate superintendent found the book "developmentally inappropriate for elementary or middle school students." Media specialists for elementary and middle schools in the district will be directed not to purchase this book. A student member of the review committee stated that he "wished this book had been available to him when he was younger as it showed that gays were just another type of person, part of a minority group like African Americans or Hispanic Americans."

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INCIDENT: In Garrett County, objections to outcome based education (OBE), which has been in place in the curriculum for several years, for allegedly replacing academics with "values, attitudes, opinions, and relationships," "subjective" grading, and teaching of "universalism."

OBJECTOR: Community members and school board members, one of whom is a member of the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: The board voted to develop an ad hoc committee to study the district's use of OBE.

Nearly 100 teachers, parents, and community members turned out at two school board meetings, which had to be held in the planetarium to accommodate everyone, in order to air their concerns about OBE, the Maryland State Learner Outcomes established by the State Department of Education, and the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program. The school board president complained that the OBE method may teach that the United States is part of the "world family." "It used to be patriotism...that we enjoy where we came from and that we're proud to be Americans and stuff, but now it's more like we're part of the world. Like, it's okay to be in the United Nations, to serve in the U.N....it's not okay to just say 'I'm an American.' This may be the kind of stuff that's coming down."

Another board member responded to these concerns by stating that she had attended a conference at which business leaders discussed qualities they look for in students. "The number one thing business leaders said was, 'we need people who can think.' And that's the whole point of this approach...We have not done away with the basics." An audience member also questioned the possibility of "hidden agendas" of the board-appointed ad hoc committee. Several of the board members were endorsed by a group called Concerned Families for Better Education, which espouses "traditional family values."

INCIDENT: In Harford County, objections to the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) test, on the grounds that it is outcome based education (OBE).

OBJECTOR: Parents, including members of Parents Resisting Outcome Based Education (PROBE), and right-wing activist Beverly LaHaye of Concerned Women for America.

RESOLUTION: The Harford County Council of PTAs sponsored a panel discussion, which was advertised on Beverly LaHaye's nationally syndicated radio show, to discuss the MSPAP and related issues. LaHaye urged people to attend the meeting and oppose OBE. Distorted information was disseminated, according to a Maryland State Department of Education official, both over the radio and on fliers attached to windshields. Approximately 50 people attended, many from

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a Baltimore County-based group called PROBE, which has challenged the MSPAP and OBE in other counties in Maryland. Objectors stopped short of requesting the elimination of the MSPAP test but charged that the MSPAP is trying to "dummy down" the curriculum. One panel member agreed that parents should be concerned about OBE, which he said "lends itself to monumental mushiness."

The MSPAP was developed to make curriculum more relevant and practical; the MSPAP test is designed to measure how well schools are teaching problem solving and the application of knowledge. The objectors are concerned that individual achievement is being sacrificed. But one state education official stated that the test measures "academic outlooks kids are supposed to learn" and is structured so students "think, reason, solve problems, measure and make systematic investigations."

INCIDENT: In Jessup, objections to *Draw Me A Star* by Eric Carle, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly inappropriate illustrations of nudity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The associate superintendent upheld a review committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the book. Said one committee member, "There is no gratuitous nudity." Another committee member claimed, "To me, this illustration is not offensive or shocking."

INCIDENT: In Laurel, objections to the filmstrip version of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor, in use in a fifth-grade Language Arts class, for ten uses of the word 'nigger.' Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The associate superintendent overturned a review committee's 8-2 recommendation to retain the filmstrip. Because the filmstrip is taught in conjunction with the book at the middle school level, the associate superintendent decided "while it is appropriate to have the book in an elementary school media collection, there is no reason to have the filmstrip for classroom instruction on this novel when it is not used in the curriculum." Currently, the book is available for use in the elementary school library, and the filmstrip has been removed. At the middle school level, an up-to-date video dramatization of the book had replaced the 1981 filmstrip for classroom use.

STATE OVERVIEW

MASSACHUSETTS

In Dorchester, after forbidding the librarian to show *Eyes on the Prize* to students during Black History month, an elementary school principal with connections to Citizens for Excellence in Education came close to closing down the school library. In Oak Bluffs, a salutatorian sat silently at her own graduation after school officials edited references to her rape by another student out of the speech she intended to deliver at the ceremony. In violation of school policy, a principal in Bourne removed copies of *This Boy's Life* by Tobias Wolff from an eighth-grade classroom even though students had not finished reading it.

INCIDENT: In Barnstable, objections to *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, in use in a tenth-grade English class, for vulgarity and allegedly delving into adolescent psychology. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Minister of a local church.

RESOLUTION: What began as a simple challenge to a widely read book resulted in a restructuring of the school's entire reconsideration policy. After writing several letters and taking steps to file a formal complaint, the objector became outraged to learn that, according to school policy, any material under review by a reconsideration committee could not be challenged again for another three years. The objector immediately sidelined his challenge to *The Chocolate War* and went after the policy, claiming that it was outdated, used liberal language from the 1960s and '70s and did not reflect the values of the '90s. The school committee agreed to remove the prohibition on reconsideration within three years, but refused to compromise the message of the policy, guaranteeing the freedom of education. After attacking the policy, the minister never pursued his initial challenge to *The Chocolate War*, and the book remains in use.

INCIDENT: In Bourne, objections to *This Boy's Life* by Tobias Wolff, in use in an eighth-grade English class for "obscene" language. Alternative assignment requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent and principal.

RESOLUTION: Following a complaint, the principal immediately removed the book from the class, even though students had not finished reading it, violating a policy requiring that challenged instructional materials be submitted for committee review. Subsequent attempts to place the book on a suggested summer reading list failed.

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INCIDENT: In Cambridge, objections to *Love Makes a Family: Living in Lesbian and Gay Families*, a photography exhibit by Gigi Kaeser, Peggy Gillespie and Pam Brown, featured at an elementary school to present a positive message about the diversity of families, for allegedly posing a security threat and not being subject to proper review by a school committee. An unsigned letter was sent to the superintendent stating, "We all clearly remember the tragic events that occurred at the Brookline clinic this year. We have to ask ourselves are we willing to take the risk of someone against this type of lifestyle and diplomacy coming to our school? We are not willing to jeopardize children and teacher safety to please a small select group." Cancellation requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: After holding a meeting to receive input from parents, teachers and community members, the school committee upheld its previous decision to host the exhibit. Teachers expressed the need for such an exhibit, noting that students in kindergarten use the word "gay" as an insult and several parents spoke in support of the display whose "point is to instill pride" in having a unique family. A security guard was placed in the school lobby to assuage parents' fears about a drive-by shooting, but one parent still kept her child from school for two days. Over 100 parents attended the panel discussion at the show's opening, and several classes attended the exhibit, which was on display for two weeks. Said one of the exhibit organizers, "These families exist. They face discrimination; kids are teased and scared to talk to their friends at school. We want to show that gay and lesbian families who exist in our schools are natural, visible and proud. We're trying to educate people so that this is no longer a problem."

INCIDENT: In Dorchester, objections to *Eyes on the Prize*, a documentary of the civil rights movement, shown to third-grade students by the librarian during Black History month, for allegedly being racist. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal using materials from Citizens for Excellence in Education.

RESOLUTION: While the award-winning film is included in the social studies curriculum, the principal forbade the librarian to show it or any other film to students in the future. She also refused to allow the librarian to start a reading group or library club.

Later in the year, the principal persuaded the school site council to pass a measure closing the school library for 2-3 years so that it could be "restructured" and diverting the librarian's salary to hire a "behavioral specialist" to deal with unruly students. The council, comprised of the principal, teachers and parents, voted in favor of a plan to "upgrade" the library, but parents insist that they were not properly informed of the consequences of that decision and were steam-rollered into voting before they had an opportunity to consult parents who do not serve on the council. Saying that the decision was "[b]asically...snuck past us," the parents on

the council argued that the term "restructuring" obscured the facts of the plan, that specifics of the plan were not discussed and that parents, unlike school staff who had worked on the proposal, did not have ample opportunity to consider its application. The parents pushed for a second vote, but the council voted 6-4 against re-opening the matter for discussion between the opposing sides. One parent even secured a $32,000 grant from the Healthy Boston Coalition to defray the cost of the behavioral specialist so that the librarian's position would be protected, but the principal rejected those funds.

In response, the outraged parents began a massive campaign of protest, pulling their children out of class, picketing the school building, contacting the superintendent and writing letters to the newspapers and television stations. Many felt that they had been betrayed and manipulated by the school and treated as if they were "third-grade educated."

Ultimately, the superintendent deployed a team to conduct an investigation and later ordered the principal to keep the library open, but the librarian fears the principal might follow through on her plans to close the library to open a "discipline room" next year when the new superintendent comes to the school district.

INCIDENT: In Oak Bluffs, objections to a speech written by a high school salutatorian, for containing references to the girl's rape by another student three years before. The salutatorian decided not to give her speech at the commencement ceremony after school officials made changes that replaced the rape with a reference to a "terrible thing." The principal insists that he was not trying to stifle the student's message and that the edits were intended only to make the speech "more appropriate" for a graduation ceremony. Said the principal, "I used her words to see if I could shift it into a welcoming address. I was trying to see if we could be helpful. I think there was a misinterpretation of our intentions." But the student preferred not giving the speech at all to giving a watered-down version of it. Said the student, "I thought it was a good speech, and I am not going to change my words. I feel like I would be letting myself down if I didn't deal with the experience head on...Terrible things can happen, even something as terrible as rape. But you can overcome it, and I wanted people to know that."

INCIDENT: In Orleans, objections to *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, in use in an eighth-grade language arts class and available in a middle school library, for profanity and sexually explicit language. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: While *The Chocolate War* had already been read by the class, the parents of one student filed a formal petition against the book, seeking its removal from the library shelves and the eighth-grade curriculum. The book was tem-

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porarily removed from the library pending the decision of the review committee to retain the book in the school collection. Since the school's current reconsideration policy only covers library materials, it is unclear whether *The Chocolate War* will be included next year as part of the eighth-grade curriculum. According to the principal, a review committee will be formed to devise a policy that can address challenges to all instructional materials used at the school.

INCIDENT: In South Yarmouth, objections to *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck, in use in seventh-grade English classes, for objectionable language, specifically the words "damn" and "bitch." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: In response to the formal complaint, the reconsideration committee sent the objector materials in support of the book, which she admitted that she had not read. Before the committee could meet with the objector, she moved from the school district. *A Day No Pigs Would Die* remains in use.

INCIDENT: In Westhampton, objections to "Safe Schools for Gay and Lesbian Youth," an awareness program based on Massachusetts Department of Education Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students, on the grounds that it allegedly promotes homosexuality. Objectors requested that the program be dropped and that books purchased as resources for teachers not be allowed to circulate.

OBJECTOR: Citizens for Responsible Education, including members of the Massachusetts Family Institute, an affiliate of Focus on the Family, and the Rutherford Institute.

RESOLUTION: The Hampshire Regional School Committee adopted a mission statement that calls for protection of gay, lesbian and bisexual students.

In 1993, the Massachusetts Department of Education adopted steps to develop policies protecting gay and lesbian students from harassment, violence, and discrimination. Among other things, the Department encouraged training for school personnel in suicide prevention and suggested school-based support for lesbian and gay students and their families. The Hampshire Regional Safe Schools Task Force was formed in 1993 to implement these guidelines. In the spring of 1994 the Task Force surveyed parents on sexual orientation issues; as a result of parental complaints, the Task Force was suspended for one month by the School Committee. It was then reinstated with its membership broadened to include objectors to the Safe Schools program. One objector who was not appointed to the Task Force filed a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, claiming that he was not allowed on the Task Force because he is a heterosexual male. He dropped the complaint before a decision was rendered.

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In December of 1994, the School Committee voted 10-5 to accept the mission statement of the Task Force, which puts forth the goal of eliminating social oppression in the school community. One committee member objected on the grounds that "that means that there's social oppression to eliminate. That's accusatory towards students and faculty." The School Committee also agreed to let faculty have access to books purchased as teacher resources on gay and lesbian issues; and it agreed to make available to the public the results of the survey on sexual orientation issues.

The Task Force has planned gay and lesbian awareness events for faculty, students, and the community. An attorney from the right-wing Rutherford Institute threatened to seek court orders to stop any assemblies that "advocate" homosexuality. "Marriage is the only sanctioned sexual relationship allowed by law," he said. "So if we bring in someone who is advocating sexual activity among children, it is illegal. It is statutory rape." Nevertheless, an assembly concerning homophobia proceeded without incident. Other events are planned for the 1995-96 school year.

INCIDENT: In Massachusetts, a bill was proposed in the state legislature to require parental notification before "morally or religiously sensitive" topics can be discussed in school classrooms. Listed as examples of such "sensitive" topics were: "heterosexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transvestism, contraception, abortion, or sexually transmitted diseases." The bill would also require that parents be allowed to remove their children from classroom discussion of "human sexual education or human sexuality issues" and that the instructors provide an acceptable alternative.

The Interfaith Coalition, an ad hoc group of conservative religious groups claimed to have helped draft the bill. Opponents of the measure alleged that the Massachusetts Christian Coalition was also involved. According to a member of one group opposing the bill, "What they did to hide their involvement was have the bill formally offered by the Interfaith Coalition, the main support[ers] of whom are the radical right." The bill also had strong support from the Massachusetts Family Institute, an affiliate of Focus on the Family.

The first draft of the bill called for prior written parental consent and notice mailed to parents a minimum of ten days prior to "any public school sponsored curriculum, program or activity (whether curricular or extra-curricular)" on any "morally or religiously sensitive topic." In addition to the topics of "contraception, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases" this draft included, "human sexuality, sexual orientation, sexual or physical abuse, alcohol or drug abuse, marriage, divorce or family life, gender or sexual relationships, moral decision-making methods, suicide, euthanasia, coping with or understanding death or other forms of personal loss or grief, self-esteem, and emotional or psychological health."

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Although most of these topics were eliminated in a later draft, the bill's restrictions on teaching certain aspects of sexuality education and homosexuality in public schools were retained.

If this bill becomes law, an opponent claims, its "effect will be to discourage the development of comprehensive health education curriculums and, very importantly, programs that make schools safe for gay and lesbian students." The bill has passed the Senate and was pending the House of Representatives as this report went to press.

MICHIGAN

STATE OVERVIEW

Michigan public schools faced a broad-based attack this year, including an attempt by the governor to repeal the entire state school code. In Livonia, members of Eagle Forum challenged the use of the National Standards for United States History in district schools. Lapeer saw a divisive battle over an attempt by school board members affiliated with the Christian Coalition to rewrite the district's policy on teaching morals. Books were removed from library shelves as a result of challenges in Grosse Point, Kent County, and Williamston.

INCIDENT: In Battle Creek, objections to *Nightmares: Poems to Trouble Your Sleep* and *The Headless Horseman Rides Tonight: More Poems to Trouble Your Sleep* by Jack Prelutsky, available in an elementary school library, for containing allegedly frightening descriptions of monsters and ghouls. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to uphold a review committee's recommendation to retain the books. At a public hearing on the books, a reading teacher in the district defended the books, noting that *Nightmares* had inspired some of her students to read.

INCIDENT: In Battle Creek, objections to Alvin Schwartz's books, *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones,* and *On a Dark, Dark Night,* available in an elementary school library, for teaching witchcraft and displaying a cartoon of a beheaded woman. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the popular children's stories.

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INCIDENT: In Battle Creek, objections to *The Stupids* by Harry Allard, available in an elementary school library, because, according to the objector, it is "wrong to call people stupid." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Battle Creek, objections to *The Witches* by Roald Dahl, *The Haunted Mask* by R.L. Stine, and *Draw 50 Monsters...* by Lee J. Ames, available in elementary school libraries, for allegedly being satanic, demonic, and inappropriate for elementary children. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to accept a review committee's recommendation to retain all three books. One community member who identified himself as a devout Christian said that he did not find *The Witches* to be demonic: "I want the school district to continue to have a wide variety of literature. Children love to be scared...It's a phase they go through."

INCIDENT: In Bloomingdale, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark,* and *Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones,* all by Alvin Schwartz, available in elementary school libraries, for allegedly violent and frightening content. The objector claimed that the books "cause nightmares." The objector verbally requested that the series be removed from the library; in a written request, however, the objector asked that the books not be read aloud in the classroom.

OBJECTOR: Parent, using information from Focus on the Family.

RESOLUTION: The books were removed from the library during the reconsideration process. A committee of teachers, administrators, parents and school board members was unable to reach a decision on the books. The matter was referred to the school board, which made the unanimous decision to restrict library access to the books to fifth- and sixth-graders, and to forbid teachers to read aloud from the books in elementary school classrooms.

INCIDENT: In Grosse Pointe, objections to *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, available in middle school libraries and on a recommended textbook list for eighth-grade language arts classes, for sexual references and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent and assistant superintendent.

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RESOLUTION: After a parent complained to the school district about the sexual content and violence in *The Chocolate War*, which has been on the district's approved reading list since 1992, the assistant superintendent removed the book from the library shelves, the recommended textbook list and one language arts class. It will be reviewed as part of a review of several books in the language arts curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Harper Woods, objections to *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, for "dabbling in the occult" and presenting "instructions to the reader on how to raise a ghost." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted unanimously to retain the popular children's book. The objector appealed the decision to the school board which also voted unanimously to retain the title.

INCIDENT: In Kent County, objections to *The Stupids Die* by Harry Allard and *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, available in an elementary school library, for using the word "stupid" as a put-down and for a nude drawing of a boy. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following an informal complaint, the principal decided to remove the books. There is no formal reconsideration policy; books are generally pulled when there is a complaint.

INCIDENT: In Lapeer, three board of education members, two of whom are affiliated with the Christian Coalition, proposed a revision of existing district policy on the teaching of morals. Their resolution, which was written by the national Religious Right group Focus on the Family, encourages teachers to reinforce "traditional moral values" such as "sexual abstinence," "self-restraint" and "respect for and value of human life." One of the members stated his objection to "books that teach right or fair, instead of right or wrong" and to a story that "glorifies the homeless."

The resolution spawned a great deal of debate in Lapeer. Supporters include the chairman of the local Christian Coalition, who co-authored a letter to the local paper that stated "Separation of church and state is a myth brought forth by the humanists and expounded upon by the liberal media. Unfortunately it's now being believed by too many people and being condoned in our schools."

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Opponents, including parents, teachers, and concerned professionals, have joined to form the Lapeer Education Awareness Council (LEAC). One school board member who opposes the resolution wrote: "The teachers and other staff in our schools do teach and model traditional morals, values and civic virtue every day. Students are taught not to lie, cheat, or steal, and to treat others as they would wish to be treated. As a parent, I want the schools to uphold the basic human values taught at home and at church. I do not think the schools should mandate a list of absolutes without regard to context."

A citizens' committee composed of 16 randomly chosen community members was convened to propose revisions to the existing policy. The committee affirmed that "the primary responsibility of the district should be the achievement of those educational goals which are uniquely the province of the school" but also stated that schools should also encourage the character traits and moral values of trustworthiness, respect for others, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The school board is currently considering the committee's proposal.

INCIDENT: In Livonia, objections to the National Standards for United States History, proposed for use in a social studies program for all district schools, grades kindergarten through twelve, for allegedly changing the "facts" of United States history, not being "patriotic" enough, and placing too much emphasis on diversity and minority groups. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Members of Eagle Forum who did not have children in the public schools.

RESOLUTION: After reading an article on National Standards for United States History that advocated that students be encouraged to analyze, investigate and look critically at American history, objectors informed school officials that they perceived the word "critical" to mean anti-American. Objectors also expressed the view that students should not think, but should be told. Although the objectors were asked if they wanted to file a formal complaint, they declined. Instead, they met with the assistant superintendent four times to discuss their objections to the program, and spoke at a school board meeting. At this meeting, they distributed literature from Eagle Forum opposing educational reform and outcome based education. The National Standards for United States History will be used in the social studies program.

INCIDENT: In Marcellus, a challenge to *Night Kites* by M.E. Kerr, in use as optional reading in a software computer curriculum in the school library for seventh- and eighth-graders, on the grounds that it contains profanity and references to sexual activity. Removal of material from library at all grade and school levels requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: A subcommittee of the school board decided that the book is more appropriate for high school students and voted to move it to the high school library. Students from other grade levels can still borrow it from the high school, but it will no longer be available at the middle school.

A review committee had previously voted to retain the book, but the objectors appealed to the school board. Though some members of that committee noted that they did not personally like the book, they described it as a realistic portrayal of the lives and problems of high school students.

INCIDENT: In Ontonagon, objections to *Blackrobe* by Brian Moore, a film in use in an eleventh-grade literature class, for "depicting the New Age God of nature," for content that was allegedly pornographic and violent, and for "alluding to the religion of spiritism." The objectors claimed that the film "sexually harassed" their child.

OBJECTOR: Parent who is a school board member.

RESOLUTION: The objector wrote a letter to the principal complaining about the movie, but did not file a complaint in accordance with the reconsideration policy. Instead, the objector filed a complaint alleging that his daughter was sexually harassed. The complaint was investigated and dismissed. The objector also convinced other school board members to revise the district's materials policy. The board added an approval process for PG-13 and R-rated films that requires "prior review and express written approval of the Building Principal, and/or Superintendent of Schools and/or Committee."

INCIDENT: In Pinckney, objections to *Dark of the Moon* by Howard Richardson and William Berney, a play to be performed by high school drama students, on the grounds that the play is anti-Christian and promotes witchcraft, the victimization of women and the killing of endangered species. Cancellation of the performance requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Following a public hearing to discuss the issue, the school board allowed the play to be performed as scheduled. Several students, former students and parents spoke in support of the play at the hearing. The school board is considering implementing a new play selection policy to govern future performances.

During the first performance of the play, school officials received a bomb threat, forcing them to evacuate the school auditorium until local authorities found the threat false. After a short delay, the play continued and was performed twice more without incident.

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INCIDENT: In Williamston, objections to *Fade* by Robert Cormier, available in a middle school library, for sexual content and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the principal met with the objector and, in violation of the district's reconsideration policy, directed the librarian to remove the book from the library. Currently, the book is not available to students.

INCIDENT: In Zeeland, objections to *The Girl With the Silver Eyes*, by Willo Davis Roberts, in use in a sixth-grade class and available in a middle school library, for allegedly containing references to mysticism and the occult. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted to retain the title in the school library and as a classroom reader. The committee disagreed with the objector's interpretation of the book as "satanistic" and "felt the book was written and presented as fantasy." The book was also deemed "appropriate for this age and maturity level." However, school sources indicate that the book is no longer being selected by teachers for classroom use because they fear it will cause controversy.

INCIDENT: In Zeeland, objections to *The Stupids* by Henry Allard, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly being upsetting to children. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector reported that, after reading the popular children's book, her kindergarten daughter became upset and confused at the comical use of the word "stupid." The objector filed a formal complaint and requested that the book be removed from the elementary school library. A review committee examined the book, evaluated its appropriateness for an elementary school library and voted to retain it.

INCIDENT: In Michigan, objections to an editorial in a high school student newspaper, for advocating gay rights and publishing a picture of two men kissing. Preview of future editions of the paper requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and principal.

RESOLUTION: After receiving complaints from some parents, the principal informed the newspaper advisor that future editions of the paper would be censored by the school administration. In the next issue of the paper the author

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responded with another editorial defending the rights of students to control their own newspapers. Wrote the student, "What is the point in giving the students any say in the writing process?...[W]e can only publish ideas that are determined acceptable by the general public. Things will never change that way. I guess that is the idea."

INCIDENT: In Michigan, objections to the proposed state core curriculum, developed to comply with legislation mandating new curriculum goals by 1997-98, for being outcome based education that would "dumb down" curriculum, encouraging the study of other cultures, invading students' privacy, and focusing too much on feelings. One objector criticized the use of group projects saying, "You cannot have cooperative learning, group decision-making, and problem-solving if you're trying to think on your own." Institution of a "basic skills" curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Michigan Alliance of Families and parents.

RESOLUTION: The curriculum was subject to approval by the state board of education and a joint legislative rules committee. However, the state board of education has recommended eliminating the core curriculum after the recent election left the board with a conservative majority. Soon after the election, the conduct of four board members raised ethical questions when they took a trip, paid for by the Michigan Family Forum, to visit a Texas school district.

Just before the board's recommendation to eliminate the core curriculum, Governor John Engler led an unsuccessful attempt to repeal the entire state school code, which includes the curriculum standards and sexuality education requirements. Had he been successful, local school districts would have had to develop their own school codes to provide for even such basic requirements as teacher certification. Said the governor's spokesperson, "There's nothing like a short-term urgent crisis to force action. It lets us start with a clean slate." One resident, who is also a home-school tutor, supported local flexibility, but worried about a complete absence of state standards. Said the resident, "A narrow curriculum leads to narrow minds. Children have to live in a world that is multicultural, and schools have to think of the global picture."

INCIDENT: In Michigan, one of the first actions of the newly elected state board of education was to adopt, by a 7-1 vote, a mission statement that included numerous religious references. Said the statement, "We, the Michigan State Board of Education, believe that to teach a child created by God is a noble calling," and "[r]eligion, morality, and knowledge are necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind."

The board also included pro-voucher language that called for "school choices for

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parents," and the "removal of barriers that constrain efforts to open, sustain, and/or expand quality schools and other educational opportunities in the marketplace of a free society; and we pray for wisdom in all decisions that impact the lives of the students we serve." Observed one resident, "The repeated use of the religious language in the mission statement is a calculated distraction from its true intent, which is the radical dismantling of public education in the state of Michigan."

The statement was endorsed by Concerned Women for America, and Eagle Forum hailed the board's action with the headline, "Michigan Board of Ed. puts God in School Plan." However, the president of the Greater Flint Council of Churches questioned the constitutionality of the board's action. Said the president, "It seems to me that although they have a responsibility to develop the best education system they can, I didn't know it was part of their job to promote religion."

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STATE OVERVIEW

Across the state, there were challenges to *Values and Choices*, a sex education curriculum. *Giovanni's Room* and a homosexuality unit in an interpersonal relationships class were charged with promoting bisexuality and homosexuality, respectively. Elementary-level materials challenged included *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, Grandpa's Town, What Daddy Did, Arthur's Adventure in the Abandoned House,* and *In the Night Kitchen.*

INCIDENT: In the Anoka-Hennepin school district, objections to *The Piano*, a film directed by Jane Campion, to be shown in a high school art class that was part of the "College in the Schools" program, for containing "frontal male nudity" and violence. Said the objector, "Hollywood has not set the kind of example that I think is conducive to the type of behavior we want demonstrated in society." Removal of film and ban on R-rated movies requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent who is a school board member.

RESOLUTION: The teacher sent home permission slips after ten students, including the objector's daughter, chose the film for a project. The objector did not file a formal complaint in accordance with district reconsideration policy, but after receiving the permission slip, he successfully convinced a majority of school board members to ban R-rated films and require the approval of the principal and associate superintendent for PG-13 films. The board also removed a statement in the materials policy supporting "the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment."

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Following the policy changes, five teachers spoke to the school board in protest, the teachers' union filed a grievance, and the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union threatened the school board with a lawsuit; however, the board won praise from the Minnesota Family Council. Following the protests, the board reinstated the intellectual freedom language and lifted the ban on R-rated films. The district is currently implementing a procedure for requests to use films in classrooms. One teacher has been allowed to use an R-rated film in class, but *The Piano* was never shown.

INCIDENT: In Bemidji, objections to *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin, in use in a seventh-grade English class, for being "full of violence, bizarre behavior, witchcraft, suicide, and sex!" Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book, stating that it is "age-appropriate, acceptable and effective" as a text. In a letter to the local newspaper, the objector listed her complaints, including "[c]annibalism," "topless dresses," and "revenge, lust and jealousy." She stated that she believed the material may contribute to "the violence problem" at the local middle school. Another letter-writer responded: "The best way to get students interested in Greek mythology might be by banning it. But then, the best way to teach them about democracy might be by disposing of that, and I'm not willing to go that route."

INCIDENT: In Bemidji, a challenge to *The Indian in the Cupboard* and *The Return of the Indian* by Lynne Reid Banks, available in a middle school library, for portrayals of Native Americans as "violent, stupid and shallow." Removal of books from library and from seventh-grade accelerated reading list requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to accept a review committee's recommendation that the books be removed from district libraries and from the accelerated reading list. The review committee declared itself to be opposed to censorship but found the books, the first of which was called "the best novel of the year" by the *New York Times*, to be "lacking in literary value" and "inaccurate, harmful, and hurtful in [their] depiction of a culture."

INCIDENT: In Bemidji, objections to the *Jane Fonda Yoga Workout*, a video in use in a seventh-grade physical education class, for being offensive as a religion. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the video, calling it "philosophically balanced." The board accepted that recommendation, but two board members registered their doubts about the material. One said that as a Vietnam veteran, he could not approve anything Jane Fonda does. A member of the community wrote a letter to the local newspaper asking, "Is it not confusing to have our schools teach patriotism in the classrooms and then have a majority of our School Board approve a teaching tape authored by Hanoi Jane, who is considered by many to be a traitor?" The objector called the material "extremely dangerous stuff" and has since removed her daughter from the middle school.

INCIDENT: In Bemidji, objections to *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, in use in a ninth-grade English class, for containing profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book based on its literary value, noting that the parents have the opportunity to review planned curricula and can choose alternative literature for their children.

INCIDENT: In Bemidji, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, for "grotesque pictures and graphic descriptions." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The review committee voted unanimously to retain the book, noting that parents should not censor books for other parents' children and that the book contains authentic American folklore. The objector's children will not be allowed to check the book out of the library, as per her request.

INCIDENT: In Bemidji, objections to *Values and Choices*, a sex education curriculum in use in the human growth and development unit of an eighth-grade home economics class, for allegedly being unsuitable. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: In response to objections, a district review committee voted to retain the unit. However, a separate school-wide curriculum review committee then recommended editing the video used in *Values and Choices*. That recommendation was accepted by the Home Economics Advisory Committee and the school board. Allegedly offensive portions of the video will be deleted to make it "more acceptable by more parents."

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INCIDENT: In Eden Prairie, objections to use of guest speakers in the homosexuality unit in a class called Interpersonal Relationships (IPR), an elective for high school juniors and seniors, for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Removal of speakers, removal of unit, and/or addition of "ex-gay" speakers to supplement gay speakers requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members.

RESOLUTION: School district administrators decided to use only "experts" such as researchers, therapists, social workers, or other professionals who will "illustrate the curriculum in a way that would be free from bias and not focus on an individual's life experiences." Additionally, speakers will not be chosen on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Prior to the administrative decision, a 27-member committee had been formed to review the homosexuality unit in response to complaints by objectors. The majority opinion of that committee, which was accepted by the school board, was that the course should continue to use speakers in the homosexuality unit who would speak about their personal experience. The minority opinion of the committee was that the course should also use "ex-gay" speakers to provide balance.

Further letters of complaint from objectors, some of whom were also members of the review committee, prompted an administrative review of the unit and the administrative decision to use only experts. School board members spoke out both for and against the decision. "[I]n my view, it would not be acceptable to have anyone, homosexual or otherwise, present the material I heard on the tapes of the recent IPR classes," said one. But another stated, "This part of the class is taught to understand a section of our community and they have a right to be accepted as part of our community."

The class has been taught in the district for 20 years and includes units on family crises, eating disorders, and abuse. Students can opt out of any class, and there have been few complaints about the homosexuality unit over the years. "People do have choices in regard to this class," noted one board member. "And our own personal beliefs cannot eliminate other voices just because we disagree with them."

INCIDENT: In Little Falls, objections to *Values and Choices*, a sex education curriculum in use in seventh and eighth grades, for allegedly promoting homosexuality, abortion, contraception, and promiscuity. Alternative abstinence-only curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Group of parents and citizens called the Parents Sex Education Task Force, using an evaluation of *Values and Choices* by Taxpayers for Excellence in Education that cites the Family Research Council.

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RESOLUTION: The school board rejected the objectors' request for a simultaneous alternative sex education class.

During the 1993-94 school year, a group of parents voiced their objections to the current curriculum, in response to which the district revised its sex education program to more strongly emphasize abstinence. Several objectors were appointed to the health advisory committee, but the committee rejected *Sex Respect* and other abstinence-only curricula they proposed. In the fall of 1994, having appointed themselves the Parents Sex Education Task Force, the objectors continued to organize meetings, garner publicity, and distribute materials from Taxpayers for Excellence in Education alleging the "danger" of homosexuality and masturbation and the "sexually stimulating" nature of sex education. They then went to the school board with their proposal for an alternative curriculum. They also requested that they be included in the hiring process for a sex education teacher and on a new advisory board for reviewing sex education curricula.

In response to the rejection of their proposal, the objectors have proposed a plan whereby parents will opt their children out of the sex education curriculum so that the children can work individually in *Sex Respect* workbooks. Ironically, according to one educator, many of the objectors already home-school their children.

INCIDENT: In Minnetonka, objections to *What Daddy Did* by Neal Shusterman, available in an elementary school library, for "the maturity level of the book" that explores the reaction of two boys to the murder of their mother by their father. The objector states "There's a lot more to the book that I feel, emotionally, a child K-5 [can't handle]. Kids, 10 to 11 years old, they're so emotionally unstable anyways." Transfer of the book to a middle school library requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted 9-2 to remove the book from the elementary school. The superintendent received a copy of the committee's report, and was informed of the review committee's formal agreement to move the book to the middle school library. The two committee members who voted against the restriction said they simply could not vote to remove a book. Another member of the review committee stated, "I have a visceral reaction to removing it." A second-grade teacher also questioned the review committee, "If this is offensive, aren't there hundreds of others that are, too?"

INCIDENT: In Northfield, objections to *Arthur's Adventure in the Abandoned House* by Fernando Krahn, available in a special-skills class for students in grades one through three, on the grounds that it is "scary" for children. Specific objections were to depictions of a man being "bound and gagged" and "'bad guys' pointing guns/machine guns at the two prisoners and forcing them up the stairs." Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Teacher of another elementary school class.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted 8-1 to retain the book, noting that "students should be given the choice to select their own reading material; we should not censor."

INCIDENT: In Owatonna, objections to the Caldecott Honor nominee *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, available in an elementary school library, for containing an illustration of a nude child. The objector requested that the book not be given to any kindergarten children without parental approval, recommending the book for fourth- or fifth-graders instead.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book. Committee members felt that the book was written for and is appropriate for kindergarten-level children.

INCIDENT: In Princeton, objections to *Values and Choices*, a sex education curriculum in use in the seventh grade, for not being abstinence-only. Removal and adoption of alternative curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Group of parents.

RESOLUTION: Following a request for removal during the 1993-94 school year, the school board voted 6-1 to accept a reevaluation committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the curriculum. The objectors then appealed to the board to consider implementing an alternative curriculum. The board subsequently accepted the recommendation of the curriculum director that a second curriculum not be adopted but rather that *Values and Choices* be supplemented with materials that promote abstinence.

In their appeal for an alternative curriculum, the objectors presented a petition signed by 260 people. Among the reasons they cited were that "homosexuality, abortion [and] masturbation...are presented as having no...long-term consequences." One objector stated that the current curriculum is a liability for the district. "Because the curriculum arouses rather than informs, the district could be accused of aiding and abetting a crime by inciting consent," she said.

One health educator argued that "[s]exuality education is most effective when received before rather than after initiation of sexual activity...[12 and 13 year-olds] hear jokes, slang and misinformation on sensitive topics, which we cannot control. It is appropriate to answer their questions and provide definitions of these terms in a safe atmosphere with a caring, responsible teacher." Another health educator noted that, following a speech containing "non-factual" informa-

tion on condom use by a speaker encouraging abstinence only, students "may have stopped using condoms, but they didn't stop having sex." "It'd be interesting to study the birth rates nine to ten months after she spoke," she said.

INCIDENT: In St. Cloud, objections to *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin, in use in an eleventh- and twelfth-grade elective English class, for allegedly promoting promiscuity and bisexuality and conflicting with the religious beliefs of the objectors. According to school officials, the objectors stated: "we want to cleanse the curriculum." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to retain the book in the curriculum. Despite the availability of an alternative assignment, the objectors launched a campaign against the book and the teacher who used such "filth" in his classroom. The objectors' decision to accept or appeal the committee's recommendation had not been made as this report went to press.

INCIDENT: In St. Paul, The Catholic Defense League issued a warning to the school district about a gay, lesbian, and bisexual support group in high schools. According to the League, "The Catholic belief is that same sex activity is disordered and wrong...Since most gay/lesbian counselors reject this Catholic tenet, it would not be possible for such counselors to counsel a Catholic student without violating the religious rights of the student and of the student's parents." The League was also concerned that students may be forced to participate, and parents may not be aware of the program.

The superintendent informed The Catholic Defense League that the support group, "authorized by the federal government" and funded with foundation grants, is available only to students who voluntarily request it. Students do not have to obtain parental consent, and no parental notification is required. The superintendent, in response to the League's warning, stated: "Our schools do not engage in activities which violate an individual's religious rights, nor do we condone such activities by others."

INCIDENT: In Staples, objections to *Keeping the Love You Find* by Harvelle Hendrix, available as a resource in a family life sciences class for ninth- through twelfth-graders, for allegedly inappropriate sexual content. Reevaluation requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent whose daughter's friend was in the class.

RESOLUTION: The school board determined that the book was inappropriate for ninth- and tenth-graders and should be restricted to older students and teachers. The principal insists that the book was not "banned," rather that the board asked that students rely on the other resources available in the class.

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INCIDENT: In Minnesota, objections to *Grandpa's Town* by Takaaki Nomura, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly implied child abuse. In the book, a child is afraid to enter a public bath with her grandfather. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The book was retained in the library, but was moved from the kindergarten/primary section to the general fiction section.

INCIDENT: In Minnesota, a tuition voucher proposal was introduced in the state legislature that would provide for a limited voucher program focusing on lower income families. The bill would allow parents to use public funds to send their children to either private, non-sectarian or religious schools. Opponents raised questions regarding the constitutionality of a law which would allow state funds to be channeled into religious institutions, as well as the wisdom of diverting public resources toward private schools. While the initiative is limited to a specific group, based on income, opponents believe that it would be a first step toward a state-wide voucher plan. A representative of the Minnesota Education Association notes that in "other states, groups have used [the] poor and disadvantaged as a stepping stone." The bill did not pass in this legislative session.

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STATE OVERVIEW

An amendment to a statewide bill prohibiting the use of state funds for instruction on homosexuality or bisexuality was initially passed by the House and Senate, but was removed in conference. Meanwhile, a performance of *Falsettoland* in Hattiesburg was canceled because of the musical's gay theme. In Pontotoc County, a mother sued the school district, seeking an end to unconstitutional prayer and Bible readings over the school intercom.

INCIDENT: In Hattiesburg, objections to *Falsettoland* by William Finn and James Lapine, a musical to be performed by high school students, on the grounds that "it is inappropriate for students to play the parts of homosexual characters in a public forum." Said the objectors, "We believe...that this is a gay-agenda production rather than an AIDS-awareness production." Cancellation of the play requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents, one of whom is a local minister.

RESOLUTION: When objectors threatened legal action against the high school, claiming that the play's gay theme violated a state criminal obscenity law, the superintendent canceled the play. *Falsettoland*, which follows a Jewish family

after the father reveals that he is gay, was to be performed at Drama Festival, a regional high school drama competition held at the University of Southern Mississippi. Although the objectors had no children in the production, and although the play was not to be performed at the high school, they launched an extensive campaign to have the play canceled, holding press conferences and mailing letters of complaint to sponsors of the drama club. Said the drama teacher, "They systematically called our ticket holders, advertisers and businesses in the community....They were launching an economic boycott." A new play, *Romance, Romance*, was ultimately selected for the competition.

INCIDENT: In Pontotoc County, a citizen and mother of five children who attend the local public schools brought suit in federal court against the school district after school officials ignored her repeated requests to stop the school's unconstitutional practices of prayer and Bible readings over the intercom during the school day, classroom prayers, and religious Bible instruction as part of the school curriculum. Her children had been harassed and ridiculed for not participating. Her seven-year-old son was teased after his teacher put earphones over the boy's head so he would not hear the prayers, and when her eleven-year-old son left his classroom before Bible study, the teacher commented aloud with words to the effect that children who don't believe in God don't go to Bible class.

"Our religious faith is very important to me and to my family," the mother said. "I simply do not want the schools telling my children how and when to pray. Prayer is something that my children learn at home and in our church. It is ironic that, in the name of religion, my children are forced to face daily ridicule and cruelty. This is an injustice that must end."

People For the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi are representing the mother in the federal lawsuit. The court has issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the intercom and classroom prayers, and trial is scheduled for March 1996.

The plaintiff and her family continued to be the target of harassment and threats after the suit was filed. In Ecru, a community of 750 in Pontotoc County where she lives, many residents began to wear ribbons and post signs on their front lawns in support of school prayer, and nearly 4,000 people turned out for a "God and County" rally at the Pontotoc Court Square. At a town meeting in Georgia, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich reportedly referred to the lawsuit filed by the mother as an example of "anti-religious bias" and suggested she might prefer "an atheist school." In a letter to the Speaker, People For the American Way wrote, "We are concerned that your reported remarks show a complete disregard for the constitutional rights of religious minorities...It is a fundamental principle of American democracy and the Constitution...that the majority cannot dictate to families like [this one] the 'majority view' on religion and conscience."

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Prior to this lawsuit, a different U.S. district court had preliminarily enjoined most of the provisions of a Mississippi law requiring schools to authorize "student-initiated" prayers at all public school events, compulsory as well as voluntary. An appeal is pending in that case.

INCIDENT: In Mississippi, a House bill providing funding to public schools was amended to prohibit the use of state funds to instruct students or teachers about homosexual or bisexual behavior. The amendment passed both the House and the Senate but was removed in conference.

The State Superintendent said public schools currently have no curriculum concerning homosexuality, but a state senator said he feared school leaders might try to institute one. He cited the support of a state board of education member for a National Association of State Boards of Education resolution last fall calling for state boards to "provide leadership in eliminating the stereotypes and discrimination on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic background or national origin." The senator said, "To add sexual orientation to the list of legitimate minorities who have been discriminated against, in my opinion, is an affront to all members of those legitimate minorities." He also stated, "We're not going to take taxpayers' dollars to teach that lifestyle at our schools."

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STATE OVERVIEW

In Berkeley, a teacher was fired for allowing her students to use profanity in a creative writing assignment. *Everything You Need to Know About Sexual Abuse* was moved to a special shelf in an elementary school library in Ozark after a parent complained about the book's content. In Purdy, the Missouri Department of Education altered *Fuzzyland*, a self-esteem story used in kindergarten as part of the guidance program after receiving complaints about the story's witch and the words, "O' my gosh!"

INCIDENT: In Berkeley, an English teacher was fired after allowing her students to use profanity in a creative writing assignment. Although there were no complaints about the assignment and no warnings from the administration, the board found that the teacher had violated a district policy that states that teachers should "maintain a satisfactory standard of conduct in the classroom" and that refers to the Student Disciplinary Code that prohibits students from using profanity.

The community turned out to support the teacher both prior to and in the wake of the board's decision to fire her. Her students had written and performed plays, videotaped them and watched the videotapes. The teacher admitted that the plays and other material produced by her students contained profanity, but she explained, "My students are poor, African American, gang- or drug-involved, and

a lot of what they wrote was autobiographical." She stated, "They need to grow, they need to get to somewhere else, but they're not going to do that if they can't start where they are. I have too many examples where students started with profanity, then went to the level of metaphor and imagery and understood that it is stronger." One parent, whose daughter had had a behavior problem until she started creative writing with the teacher, addressed the school board. "What I have learned," she said, is "that when you censor children, teenagers, they turn you off."

The teacher is suing the school district. The lawsuit is pending in federal District Court.

INCIDENT: In Blue Springs, objections to *Annie On My Mind* by Nancy Garden and *All-American Boys* by Frank Mosca, donated by a gay and lesbian organization to the high school library but not yet available on the shelves, for being about homosexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Baptist church group.

RESOLUTION: The books were removed from the library by the principal, in response to phone calls from the objectors. Though no formal complaint was filed, the books were sent to the school district's central office at the beginning of the 1994-95 school year and have not been returned.

Meanwhile, the librarian evaluated the books herself and decided to purchase and formally adopt *Annie On My Mind*, having talked to several other librarians and read positive reviews of the book. She noted that aspects of the book may be offensive to some, but "it's something that our kids need to know about."

INCIDENT: In Boonville, objections to *YM* magazine, available in a middle school library, on the grounds that it "pushes sex, sex, sex." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted unanimously to retain the magazine, noting that *YM* has received favorable critical reviews and answers questions that children commonly have.

INCIDENT: In Granby, objections to the female version of *The Odd Couple* by Neil Simon, performed by high school drama students, for alleged inappropriate language and references to drugs and liquor. The objector claimed that "the dialogue was generously sprinkled with foul, four-letter gutter words" and "promoted and glorified the use of drugs and alcohol." School board approval of future play selections requested.

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OBJECTOR: Grandparent.

RESOLUTION: The teacher received approval from the principal to direct the female version of *The Odd Couple* and to include two "damns" and two "hells." Following the first of three performances, three junior high school teachers and the superintendent objected to the use of these profanities, and the teacher was instructed to remove the language from the play. She complied, and at the second performance of the play even "darns" were omitted. After viewing the second performance, the objector asked the teacher if he could borrow a script of the play. The teacher agreed, but informed him that all profanity and inappropriate references had been eliminated from the performed version.

The objector did not file a formal complaint, but instead delivered a statement of disapproval of the play at a school board meeting. He said "drugs and hard liquor were referred to no less than nine times," and recommended that school board members become more involved in the approval process to "prevent an undesirable play of this nature from being produced in the future." In response, the teacher said that although the written script contained nine references to drugs and hard liquor, the performance mentioned alcohol twice in the context of characters' lives, and had only "one very funny line that mentioned valium and speed."

The school board decided to implement a play committee to review and select plays for student use. After the committee was in place, the teacher resigned from her position effective at the end of the 1994-95 school year. Asked whether the establishment of the play committee was related to her resignation, she said, "It has everything to do with it. I'm not going to teach where I'm not trusted."

INCIDENT: In Kansas City, objections to *The Elephant's Child* by Rudyard Kipling, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly implying child abuse. The objector claimed the book had tones of molestation, incest and vicious behavior. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The review committee voted unanimously to retain the book in the library's collection.

INCIDENT: In Ozark, objections to *Everything You Need to Know About Sexual Abuse* by Evan Stark and Marsha Holly, available in an elementary school library, for the "full detail it goes through." The objector wrote that a child "that has not been abused is learning things age nine should not know." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the library. The

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book has been moved to a special shelf, making it accessible only to students who are specifically searching for it. Committee members noted that the book, written at a fourth-grade level, "could serve a much needed purpose of helping a child in trouble who would be afraid to approach an adult with his/her problem initially. It is written in an open, factual way." The committee report further stated, "We also respect the right of parents to censor their own children's reading materials, but we feel that the right of censorship does not extend to children outside of their guardianship."

INCIDENT: In Purdy, objections to *Fuzzyland*, a self-esteem story included in the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program, in use in a kindergarten class, for allegedly being satanic and using profanity. *Fuzzyland*, a story that "helps children understand the importance of saying positive comments to others and receiving compliments themselves," tells the tale of the Warm Fuzzies, whose "warm feelings, feelings of being OK and of being loved" are threatened when a bad witch hands out "Cold Pricklies," that "did not make people feel warm and fuzzy, but made them feel cold and prickly instead." The objector claimed that the bad witch in the story is the sign of Satan and that the Cold Pricklies possess characteristics of the devil. She also said that the words, "O' my gosh!" were using the Lord's name in vain. Revisions requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following the complaint, the guidance counselor rewrote the story, whiting out the words, "O' my gosh" and changing the character of the bad witch to a bad puppy. Later that year, the Missouri Department of Education altered the statewide program by changing the character of the witch to a "Whipple," noting that the modification was made to "preserve the purpose and quality of the story without using the word 'witch.'"

INCIDENT: In St. Peters, objections to *Ceremonial Magic* by Daniel Cohen, available in an elementary school library, for presenting "black magic and satanic practices in a favorable, approving manner omitting the association of these practices with evil." The objector claimed the book contained "details of simple ceremonies, the Black Mass, and the pact with the Devil." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to remove *Ceremonial Magic* from elementary and middle school libraries but to make it available for consideration at the high school level. While the committee agreed that the book "does not conform to selection criteria when considered as a learning resource for elementary and middle level students," it strongly disagreed with the objector's interpretation of the book as a satanic guidebook. The committee determined that the book "is an appropriate instructional resource material for senior high students" but also stated the opinion that the book was

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"watered down, somewhat confusing, and less than a serious effort to provide significant information." The committee also stated: "Parents have the right to determine that individual materials in the school library may not be appropriate for their child. Parent requests that such material not be given to their children will be honored. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing, or listening matter for students other than his/her own children."

INCIDENT: In Springfield, objections to a field trip to the Springfield Art Museum, for fifth-grade students throughout the district, because of nude figures in a featured exhibit. Cancellation of trip requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent and district administrators.

RESOLUTION: The annual field trip to the museum was canceled and then rescheduled after a parent complained to administrators that a featured exhibit included nude paintings. The objector, who had signed a permission slip for her child to participate in the field trip, took issue with the painting "Dionysos and Basilinna," a mythical diptych that contains four nude figures but displays no genitalia. School officials immediately canceled the trip noting that "some of the exhibits would more appropriately be viewed by students with their parents rather than in a school setting with their peers." After receiving calls from several parents opposing this decision, the administration rescheduled the trip for the next exhibit, which also contained nudes, but sent parents a detailed letter and permission slip describing the content of the collection. Every parent in the district signed the permission slip.

INCIDENT: In Missouri, tuition voucher legislation was introduced that would have allowed parents to use public funding to send their children to private schools, both non-sectarian and religious. Opponents of voucher initiatives point to the problems associated with depleting funds for public education, as well as the constitutionality of using public money for religious schools. The initiative failed this session, but is likely to be introduced in the next legislative session.

MONTANA

STATE OVERVIEW

The films *Schindler's List* and *Rain Man*, both being shown in high schools, were the target of objections for their R ratings. In Bozeman, R-rated films were banned from the ninth grade as a result of complaints.

INCIDENT: In Bozeman, objections to *Rain Man*, a film in use in tenth-grade English classes, for having an R rating. Ban of R-rated films from high school requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: In violation of district policy, the principal referred the objectors to the school board instead of filing a review form. The school board voted to continue allowing teachers to choose films for grades ten through twelve, but banned R-rated movies from the ninth grade.

INCIDENT: In Miles City, objections to *Schindler's List*, directed by Steven Spielberg, for the film's R-rating. According to school officials, the objectors also claimed that the sex, violence and profanity present in the media are causing the downfall of society. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members.

RESOLUTION: Before the film was shown, a permission slip was sent to parents alerting them to the content of the film and requesting that they voice any objections to their children viewing it. After discussing the situation with several parents, the administration issued a second, more detailed, permission slip to be filled out before the students could view the film. In addition, the administration showed an abridged version of the film, editing out the potentially objectionable scenes, despite director Steven Spielberg's refusal to permit the film to be shown in any condensed form. An alternative program was made available to those students who were not given permission to see *Schindler's List*. Despite these precautions, compromises and alternatives, two parents continued to contest the film's appropriateness in the school system and brought their objections before the school board urging a review of school policy and procedures. In response to the controversy, the school ultimately adopted a formal review procedure that would not only address challenges to library books, but that could review filmstrips and other educational media.

STATE OVERVIEW

NEBRASKA

Despite pressure from a small group of objectors to remove a sex education program from elementary schools, the school board in Valentine voted to retain it.

INCIDENT: In Valentine, objections to an elementary school sex education program, on the grounds that it is not age-appropriate. Removal of first- through fourth-grade sex education and "any Family Life material that is influenced by Planned Parenthood" requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and a local Baptist minister.

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RESOLUTION: After convening a special meeting and hearing testimony from various experts, interested parties, and a school committee, the school board voted 4-2 to retain the program, stating that it is too important to eliminate and that parents can always choose to remove their own children from the program.

The school board acted in response to the objectors who, dissatisfied with the school-appointed committee that was reviewing the sex education curriculum, formed their own committee and recommended to the school board that, among other things, the board "adopt a pre-marital abstinence, value-based Family Life Curriculum." They complained about the use of anatomically correct paper dolls and the statement "you become a human being when you come out of your mother's womb."

"There have been rumors that we're measuring penises, talking about oral sex, passing out condoms and all sorts of other wild things, and that is absolutely not true," said the superintendent. "We would hope that they would give us enough credit to know we wouldn't do that kind of thing, but apparently, they don't."

NEVADA

STATE OVERVIEW

In Elko, Christian Coalition members led a successful campaign to reject funding for education reform through Goals 2000 and Nevada 2000. In Washoe County, objectors alleged that providing a gay and lesbian youth-outreach phone number to teens and allowing presentations by people with AIDS would promote homosexuality.

INCIDENT: In Clark County, the school board rejected a proposal from Nevada Concerned Citizens that would have created restrictive selection guidelines for a wide range of supplemental materials. One proposed section read, "Moral issues with no solutions which have the potential to cause negative emotions in the young should be avoided." Another discouraged "potentially ego-destructive" activities, which were defined as "[m]aterials and procedures which would reveal highly personal or potentially embarrassing matters." School district staff did not endorse the proposal. Said one teacher, "I want to believe we are in a marketplace of ideas and not a school room of intimidation."

Before the board vote, one community member told the school board, "Censorship in any form...limits our ability to consider ideas in a relatively safe environment; when the hard choices must be made, there must be some background, some familiarity with the issues and the choices and the consequences of making the wrong choice." One member of Nevada Concerned Citizens described opposition to their proposal as "a transparent attempt by the left to control what students think, see and hear" and alleged that this was a move "to silence the parents who oppose their paganistic efforts."

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INCIDENT: In Elko, objections to Nevada 2000, a school reform plan that contains goals from the federal Goals 2000 program plus additional goals specific to the state of Nevada, on the agenda of the school district's board of trustees meeting, for allegedly being "garbage" and "a wolf in sheep's clothing." Objectors at the board meeting requested that the schools eliminate environmental education, gender equity awareness and multicultural education, and accused the schools of being more interested in social than in academic education. Arguments were made against accepting money and guidance from a "corrupt" federal government whose Vice President gave a party in his home for lesbians. Literature was distributed by members of the Christian Coalition decrying the "watered-down" program that they said encourages children to "question Traditional Family Values and Absolute Truths," develop "Tolerance for homosexuality" and become victims of "brainwashing" and "cloning." Rejection requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and members of the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: In response to opposition led by members of the Christian Coalition, the board members voted not to submit an application for Nevada 2000, which prevents students in the district from receiving Goals 2000 federal funding for educational reform. However, under a rural alliance which serves to bring the 17 districts of Nevada together to achieve common goals, federal money will be available for "planning and developing" educational improvement, giving school board members an opportunity to learn more about the program and its effectiveness in other school districts.

INCIDENT: In Washoe County, objections to a proposed field trip for fifth- and sixth-graders to see the AIDS quilt during the AIDS education component of a sex education class, on the grounds that it is allegedly age-inappropriate. Cancellation of field trip requested.

OBJECTOR: Trustees.

RESOLUTION: Despite a unanimous recommendation from the sex education advisory committee to allow the field trip, the school trustees voted to bar the students from visiting the AIDS quilt during class time. According to district policy, field trips do not require board approval unless they involve students and teachers discussing sexual contact. Some objectors argued that a visit to the quilt would cut into teaching time, while others expressed concerns about the emotional nature of such a visit. One district administrator noted that two of the objectors oppose anything but abstinence-only sex education.

A trustee who voted in favor of the field trip stated, "[K]nowing that these people who died tragic deaths were remembered by loved ones would bring home the seriousness of the problem to the students." A local AIDS activist commented, "It's not about sex education. It's about life and death."

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INCIDENT: In Washoe County, objections to a proposal to move *Frontline*, a program featuring presentations by people with AIDS, into the sixth-grade sex education curriculum, for allegedly promoting homosexuality and being age-inappropriate. Rejection of proposal requested.

OBJECTOR: Member of the sex education advisory committee, parents and ministers, member of Eagle Forum, members of a taxpayers group.

RESOLUTION: After the advisory committee recommended 4-1 to move *Frontline* into the sixth grade, the board of trustees voted 4-3 not to accept that recommendation.

The *Frontline* program is currently in the ninth-grade curriculum, but the sex education advisory committee decided it was important for students to have information about AIDS before, rather than after, becoming sexually active. One district curriculum official emphasized that the speakers would not be presenting any new information to students; all the information would be reinforcing what they had learned in the sex education program, and the speakers would be replacing a videotaped presentation by a person with AIDS, which is currently in use.

"This [program] is a dangerous thing," one objector stated, though he had never heard any of the speakers. "We care about kids and we don't want deviant lifestyles presented in a positive way." Another objector said, "I want to keep [children] from thinking about some of these kinds of problems...Free from the problems that come with early experimentation." A supporter of the program argued, "Sometimes we don't give children enough credit that they know things and are aware of things. Sometimes I think we don't because we don't want them to grow up."

INCIDENT: In Washoe County, objections to the proposed inclusion of the phone number of a gay and lesbian youth-outreach program on a card distributed to middle and high school students in the Sexuality Health and Responsibility Education (SHARE) Program, on the grounds that it would promote homosexuality and promiscuity. Omission of phone number requested.

OBJECTOR: Members of sex education advisory committee, parents and ministers, member of Eagle Forum, members of a taxpayers' group.

RESOLUTION: After the sex education advisory committee voted 4-3 to include the gay and lesbian youth-outreach phone number, the board of trustees voted 4-3 to omit it.

The sex education advisory committee recommended the inclusion of the gay and lesbian youth-outreach phone number because of increasing student requests for such information. One objector believed providing such information would harm the family unit. Another, a minister, said, "This [being gay] is not an acceptable

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lifestyle, it's a deathstyle." Some objectors responded to the proposal of the outreach number by proposing to include a phone number for a group of ministers who oppose homosexuality; that notion was rejected by the majority of the committee because the group "almost requires that you call Christ your savior before assistance is given."

A minister and parent on the committee supported the inclusion of the number. "In this society, we need to live with one another and respect one another," he said. "Listing of a number does not imply an endorsement....But different students have different needs."

The trustees voted to include the telephone number of the Nevada AIDS Foundation on the resource card.

STATE OVERVIEW

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire's governor gained the praise of the Christian Coalition after rejecting federal Goals 2000 funding. In Merrimack, controversial deliberations of the school board divided the community over issues such as Creationism, school prayer, and health education. Health education programs were also under attack in Bedford, Conway, Dover, and Rochester, and a teacher in New Ipswich is facing dismissal as a result of objections by school board members to literature with gay and lesbian themes in high school classes.

INCIDENT: In Bedford, objections to an approved health curriculum, in use in kindergarten through second grade, for allegedly teaching about homosexuality and masturbation. One objector alleged that students designed mobiles of penises and vaginas in class, but a school board member denied that this was a part of the curriculum. The objectors requested changes in the curriculum and that health education be taught in a class of its own instead of dispersed throughout different classes.

OBJECTOR: Parents calling themselves Concerned Citizens of Bedford.

RESOLUTION: The school board had voted last year to formally approve a health curriculum that had been in use for years, and to add updated HIV/AIDS material. Implementation of the curriculum changes was to be delayed for a year so that teachers could be trained. Due to the objections of a small group of parents calling themselves Concerned Citizens of Bedford, the school board revised the curriculum, removing references to HIV and AIDS as well as an activity called the "magic circle." The school board has since voted unanimously to implement the revised curriculum.

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INCIDENT: In Bedford, a town election reversed the school board's earlier 3-2 vote to implement a mandatory "moment of silence" in the district's public schools. The board had passed the measure over the objections of a large crowd at the meeting and despite a petition signed by 200 residents opposing the policy. One board member who had recently been denounced as a "New Age secular humanist" unsuccessfully tried to prevent the measure.

INCIDENT: In Conway, objections to the demonstration of contraceptive use during health education class in a junior/senior high school, for allegedly not promoting abstinence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Superintendent.

RESOLUTION: Amid community and school board controversy over the teaching of contraception, the superintendent issued a directive to health educators stating that contraceptives were not to be demonstrated. The directive also required parental notification of the content of sex education being taught, and use of consultants and materials consistent with the district's abstinence-based policy.

Earlier, in the spring of 1994, several board members had expressed concern about condom demonstrations using bananas. There was also general concern about the content of health education. One objector wrote in a letter to the local newspaper that "[f]ormal sex education is a rape of the mind" and that such education is better left to parents. However, the school board had decided not to make any changes in the curriculum until the review process was completed. The superintendent issued his directive before that process was completed.

A school board member from a neighboring school district wrote to the Conway board. "Where is this directive coming from?" the letter said. "There was no vote of the committee or the board regarding this...All of the students in our communities have the right to receive accurate and complete information so that they can then make appropriate decisions on their own. If we give them anything less, then we have failed." Another supporter of the curriculum argued that without information on contraceptives, "what you're basically telling them is abstain or die."

INCIDENT: In Dover, objections to a presentation on condom use and HIV prevention given twice a year to ninth-graders by a local doctor, for allegedly not emphasizing abstinence and citing supposedly inaccurate condom failure rates. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members.

RESOLUTION: The school board heard the objectors' complaints but supported the doctor's presentation. The board said it considered the matter closed.

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The doctor cited research on the prevention of HIV transmission and condom use from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. He said his presentation stresses abstinence and the high risk associated with using condoms improperly. Such research shows that if condoms are used consistently and correctly, 1 in 100 people will contract HIV if their partner is HIV-positive.

One of the objectors asked the doctor whether he would use a condom if he had the chance to "copulate" with "the most desirable woman of [his] dreams" and she was HIV-positive. The chairman of the school board interrupted him and later called such personal comments "inappropriate."

INCIDENT: In Dover, objections to the sex education curriculum in place in all grades, for allegedly promoting promiscuity and homosexuality. One objector told the school board that "[i]t's a joke to refer to the curriculum...as 'abstinence based'...A more accurate description for this curriculum, which has a moral deficit disorder, is 'abstinence mentioned.'" Review and/or removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Group called the Concerned Dover Citizens and other community members.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to accept the recommendations of the sex education task force to exclude topics of abortion, homosexuality, and masturbation from the curriculum in grades one through four.

Beginning in 1994, objectors started requesting review and/or removal in letters to school board members and giving them articles on the virtues of chastity. Although the objectors wanted the entire curriculum reviewed, the board decided to review only the program in grades one through four and to suspend that program during the review.

The task force charged with reviewing the curriculum held a series of community forums before giving their recommendations. Hundreds of people attended the forums, and the issue was the subject of intense community debate. A petition signed by more than 1,000 residents called for an abstinence-only curriculum. A local couple with no children in public school coordinated the petition drive and accused the school district of endangering children's welfare by giving them information on contraceptives and conspiring with family-planning agencies to implement a liberal agenda. One of these objectors compared the school officials' tactics to those of Nazis. "Now the plan to sexploit our vulnerable children has been exposed," he said. Another objector said that sex education in the schools is in the hands of "monkey people," people who believe humans evolved from apes rather than believing in Creationism.

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INCIDENT: In Goffstown, objections to *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, in use in a tenth-grade English class, for alleged negativity, objectionable language, and because the book "indoctrinates atheism which a teacher cannot have in class." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to uphold the decisions of both the superintendent and the review committee to retain the book. In his decision, the superintendent wrote, "I believe that the controversial nature of this book, or any book, should not serve as an impediment to its use in the classroom."

INCIDENT: In Gorham, objections to *Fade* by Robert Cormier, listed among a selection of books for an eleventh-grade English class, for allegedly containing excessive sex, profanity and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Student and parents.

RESOLUTION: Following the objection of one student, a group of parents, including some who did not have children in the class, made formal and informal complaints demanding that the book be removed from the curriculum and requesting that parents be given the opportunity to review books on the reading list prior to the start of the school year. After reviewing the book and discussing it with the teacher, the principal refused to remove it. The parents appealed to the school board, but the board upheld the principal's decision to retain the book on the grounds that the students had a choice of several books to read for the class and that the offended student could make another selection. The school board also voted to develop a review committee to evaluate the current policy for the reconsideration of challenged materials and to clarify and elucidate the objectives of material selection and the review process.

INCIDENT: In Hanover, objections to the gay singing group, *The Fabulous Flirtations*, who performed for and talked with third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders, for identifying themselves as gay to elementary children. Said one objector, "I felt the need to get active because I think we are heading in the wrong direction, and I wanted to see what I could do to stem the tide and get us back on track." Apology from principal and a new school board policy on controversial assemblies requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The principal said that she was sorry that some felt uncomfortable during the question period, but in a letter to parents she wrote that the performance was "age-appropriate and very much in line with the [school] philosophy of appreciating differences among people." The objector said that she would gather signatures to present to the board asking for a policy and an apology, but as this report went to press no action had been taken.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

INCIDENT: In Merrimack, the school board chair proposed adding a "Prohibition of Alternative Lifestyle Instruction" policy during a review of the health curriculum. The proposed policy states that the district "shall neither implement nor carry out any program or activity that has either the purpose or effect of encouraging or supporting homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative." The policy would be applied to "instructional materials, instruction, counseling, or other services on school grounds, or referral of a pupil to an organization that affirms a homosexual lifestyle."

One parent expressed concerns to the chair: "Your move to keep our community safe from homosexuality is ridiculous. All that you have done is tell a significant number of our high school students that you do not value or support them." A board discussion and vote on the proposal were pending as this report went to press.

INCIDENT: In Merrimack, a local pastor proposed that "Creation science" be taught alongside evolution in science classes. He called the omission of Creationism "intellectual bigotry" and after much informal debate, he submitted a proposal to the school board and sponsored a lecture by an official of the Institute for Creation Research. The proposal requested the use of the Bible as a classroom resource and adoption of books that teach both Creationism and evolution as "assumptions." Said the pastor, "If a student or a textbook referenced the Bible, what's the problem with that? It's a technical book, it's a historical book, and it's a spiritual book." A graduate of Merrimack schools commented at a board meeting, "Are you all nuts? This board is sending the youth in this town into an educational slaughterhouse."

The proposal was one in a series of controversies since a Religious Right-linked majority gained control of the school board. The pastor eventually withdrew his proposal in the face of substantial opposition from residents, but said he had future plans to reintroduce it. The board voted to limit public input at meetings, angering the 150 residents who had come to testify on the Creationism issue. The three conservative board members left under police escort while the residents testified to the remaining two members.

At the invitation of local pro-Creationism activists, the California-based Institute for Creation Research sent a representative to Merrimack for a series of presentations on the issue.

Two conservative board members, one of whom spoke at the Christian Coalition's national "Road to Victory" conference, had publicly supported the Creationism proposal. Said one, "If you're only going to teach evolution, then your God is King Kong. I'm sorry - my children and my grandchildren did not come from apes. King Kong is not my God!"

NEW HAMPSHIRE

INCIDENT: In Merrimack, after months of debate, the school board voted 3-2 to implement a "moment of silence" in all schools. Despite substantial opposition voiced at board meetings, the three board members in the majority said that the community as a whole supported the measure. However, an analysis in a local newspaper said that the vote "produced levels of anger — from board members and the public — unseen in the five months since the board's shift to the right." A former school board member attributed the resolution to the increased influence of the Christian Coalition on the school board. On the first day that the moment of silence was implemented, several middle school students were suspended after they walked out of their classrooms in protest. The school board chair attributed the student's action to "adolescent belligerency."

INCIDENT: In Merrimack objections to an anonymous question-and-answer practice in fifth-, seventh-, and tenth-grade health classes, for inviting allegedly inappropriate questions. The longstanding practice allowed students to submit questions anonymously for teachers to answer in class. Removal of practice requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: The board voted 3-2 to ban the question-and-answer procedure temporarily while a committee assigned to review the district's health curriculum studies the issue. The board chairman said that parents had complained, and he questioned whether it was "a positive thing to have kids asking questions they would otherwise have some scruples about." However, a board member who voted against the ban said this was a first step toward removing any discussion of sexuality in health classes.

The health curriculum has been under review since a conservative majority on the school board objected to sections on AIDS education and sexual subjects. The curriculum and the question and answer practice have not yet been brought before the board for a final decision.

INCIDENT: In New Ipswich, objections to *Maurice* by E.M. Forster, in use as optional reading in a twelfth-grade English class, *The Education of Harriet Hatfield* by May Sarton, in use as optional reading in an eleventh-grade English class, and *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* by Bette Greene, available as optional reading in a tenth-grade English class, for containing gay/lesbian themes. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: The books were ordered removed from the classroom by the principal at the board members' request; when the teacher protested, the superintendent recommended to the school board that she be dismissed for "gross insubordination." The dismissal hearing is pending.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

All three books were purchased during the 1993-94 school year with money from a grant from the Respect for All Youth Fund to fund a homophobia workshop for teachers and to purchase literature to counter negative stereotypes of gays and lesbians. The workshop, arranged by the teacher, engendered a great deal of controversy in the community and accusations that the teacher was trying to promote "the Gay agenda." The principal ordered the English department chair to review the teacher's curriculum. He also ordered the teacher to avoid discussion of the topic of sexual orientation in her classes and told her to "use extreme caution in any out of class contacts that [she] might have with students."

Subsequently, a committee that included school board members, parents, students, and community members reviewed between ten to fifteen novels and selected four for purchase with the grant money. One of the major concerns of the committee was that the books not be sexually explicit or promote sexual activity. Of the four it chose, three books were those later challenged.

The three books were not scheduled to be used in classrooms until the spring of 1995, although they were purchased and paid for in the summer of 1994 with the then-superintendent's approval, and they were available to students as of September 1994. In January of 1995, the principal ordered the teacher not to distribute the books to her classes because the school board did not want books with gay and lesbian characters in the classroom. The teacher questioned the principal and wrote letters to the superintendent and to the chairman of the school board, asking them for an explanation. The chairman never responded and the superintendent's response two months later did not address her concerns. The teacher collected the books from other classrooms and stored them in her classroom.

When the books came up in the lesson plan later in the school year, the teacher decided to continue with them as planned. Both eleventh- and twelfth-graders were given choices of material, including the challenged books. Twelfth-graders were already halfway through *Maurice*, and eleventh-graders had just been given *The Education of Harriet Hatfield*, when the administration ordered them collected from students. At the next school board meeting, board members were accused of censorship by students and community members. A petition signed by approximately 100 students protested the board's actions.

The board contended that the books had not been approved by the curriculum committee and the superintendent stated that the teacher had known that; the teacher contended that she was not aware of any approval process in addition to what the books had already undergone. "Every procedure had been followed to the letter," she said. "There was no other process. You don't just go and spend $800 on books knowing you might not use them."

One student commented, "The school board is being too personal about this, using their personal opinions of homosexuals to take books away."

NEW HAMPSHIRE

INCIDENT: In Rochester, objections to *Health Skills for Life*, a health curriculum proposed for use in kindergarten through fifth grade, for allegedly being too explicit, having values that differ from "Christian morality," and because it "drive[s] a wedge between the children and the parents." Rejection of curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents, community members, and several local Catholic churches using material from Focus on the Family.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 7-6 to approve the curriculum after months of debate and committee review, but a second-grade unit on human reproduction and a story about sexual abuse intended for kindergarten were removed. Said one of the objectors, "I'm going to have heart failure. This isn't what I want." A dissenting school board member criticized the program for "teaching life skills, not academic skills." However, another board member said that she received many calls in support of the program and was "appalled at the misinformation" spread about it.

Some local pastors organized against the curriculum, circulating a "fact sheet" that cited materials published by Campus Crusade for Christ. Said the flier, "We believe that programs such as these actually encourage dangerous and immoral behavior." One of the pastors said he wanted material "to use terminology...in keeping with Christian morality. I think it's important that they get the right curriculum in."

INCIDENT: The governor of New Hampshire accepted the state Board of Education's 4-2 vote to reject approximately $2.3 million in federal funding for Goals 2000 programs, on the grounds that it is outcome based education (OBE), promotes self-esteem rather than academic excellence, and leads to federal control of local schools. New Hampshire became the only state besides Virginia to reject Goals 2000 money in 1995.

The governor stated, "Goals 2000 should not be outcomes-based...[O]ur goal in education is not high self-esteem. It is performance and academic excellence. Goals 2000 should not be a bureaucratic license to give psychological support to students." Leading the opposition to Goals 2000 in New Hampshire was People for a Responsible Education Policy (PREP), warning of the strings attached to accepting Goals 2000 money. "The strings come after you've accepted the participation," said the chairwoman of PREP. She also claimed, "The whole intent of Goals 2000 is to bring in a one-world government, a one-world socialist government." A local school board member referred to Goals 2000 legislation as involving "backdoor social engineering." The president of New Hampshire Right to Life alleged that Goals 2000 is linked to comprehensive health education and a pro-abortion agenda.

The state coordinator of the Christian Coalition praised the governor's decision to reject the funding. He also praised one member of Congress from New Hampshire who promised to push for a "Back to Basics Act" that would eliminate the U.S. Department of Education and repeal Goals 2000.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

STATE OVERVIEW

NEW JERSEY

In Bloomfield, parents complained that the video series, *What Every Child Needs to Know About Sex and Growing Up*, used in a sixth-grade health class, contained material that would leave children "spiritually molested." In Montville, objectors claimed *A Prayer for Owen Meany* contained anti-Christian material and requested that it be removed from a tenth-grade English class. In Palmyra, *Populations* was banned from a district's eighth-grade science curriculum despite protests from students, one of whom stated, "I really don't think it's fair for a limited group of parents to decide what the entire eighth grade should be reading."

INCIDENT: In Bloomfield, objections to *What Every Child Needs to Know About Sex and Growing Up*, a series of videos in use in sixth-grade health class, for allegedly sanctioning masturbation and homosexuality. The objector claimed that some of the videos, which are produced by PBS as part of the Children's Television Workshop series, would leave children "spiritually molested." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: After receiving complaints from a small group of parents, the board of education decided to retain the videos. The videos had recently been through an extensive selection process that the assistant superintendent said was structured to reflect the community and its needs and comply with state requirements for sex education. Although one parent said she would fight the decision, she chose to follow the procedure for removing her child from the showing. The videos in question were recommended by the producers for ages 8 and older.

INCIDENT: In Montville, objections to *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving, in use in a tenth-grade English class, for allegedly anti-Christian material. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board considered the complaint against the book and decided to retain it.

NEW JERSEY

INCIDENT: In Palmyra, objections to *Populations*, a textbook in use as supplemental reading in an eighth-grade science class, on the grounds that it contains information that is age-inappropriate and biased. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 5-4 to ban the book from the district's science curriculum.

The text contains articles about contraception, abortion, sterilization, immigration, and other issues related to population and overpopulation. The objectors first raised their objections in a meeting with the principal and then on fliers. At the board meeting, they presented a petition signed by 170 Palmyra residents opposing the book.

About twenty-five eighth-graders also presented a petition in favor of the material. The student who drew up the petition stated, "I really don't think it's fair for a limited group of parents to decide what the entire eighth grade should be reading." Other supporters of the book argued that it promotes critical thinking on important issues. "Some comments were made that kids shouldn't think about this stuff," the high school principal noted. "In five years, these kids are going to be voting."

NEW MEXICO

STATE OVERVIEW

In Santa Fe, a substitute teacher threatened to sue the school district after being suspended for Creationist lessons she taught in an eighth-grade science class.

INCIDENT: In Santa Fe, a substitute teacher lectured on Creationism and showed portions of *Genes and Genesis*, a Creationist video, to an eighth-grade science class. Three students notified the principal about the lessons. Said one student, "I felt like she was teaching Christianity. I felt like she was preaching." The district removed the instructor from the list of substitute teachers for failing to follow prepared lesson plans. The substitute, with assistance from the American Center for Law and Justice, threatened a lawsuit challenging district rules that instruct teachers to remain neutral towards religious topics in the classroom. However, no legal action has been pursued to date.

STATE OVERVIEW

NEW YORK

In Hudson Falls, parents and community members calling themselves Citizens Advocating Responsible Education sought removal of *A Boy's Life* by Robert McCammon, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* by Neil Simon and *Native Son* by Richard Wright for containing objectionable language and sexual content. A parent in Chappaqua, objecting to scenes of "homosexual lovemaking and suicide," requested that Jane Yolen's *Briar Rose* be removed from a suggested summer reading list. Claiming that she was "strengthening" the multicultural curriculum, the president of the board of education in New York City advocated the elimination of sexual orientation, age, gender, religion and disability from the categories previously included in the curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Chappaqua, objections to *Briar Rose* by Jane Yolen, available in a middle school library and included on a suggested summer reading list, for containing scenes of "homosexual lovemaking and suicide" and other "disturbing passages." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector, who acknowledged that he had not read the book because he saw "no need" to do so, filed a formal complaint after his daughter had selected the award-winning book from a summer reading list at the school library. He demanded that the book be withdrawn from the library and subjected to a re-evaluation of its worthiness. A review committee formed to evaluate the book voted unanimously to retain it. The committee's recommendation was upheld by the superintendent. The book remains in the library and on the suggested summer reading list, which, upon a recommendation from the review committee, is now annotated to include information for students and their parents about books that contain mature subject matter and is accompanied by a letter urging parents to be active participants in their children's selection of reading materials.

INCIDENT: In Goshen, objections to two students' posters, displayed in a middle school hallway as part of an eighth-grade art class assignment, for dealing with a "highly emotional and sensitive issue." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Interim principal.

RESOLUTION: The objector ordered the removal of the posters, which depicted two sides of the abortion debate. The posters fulfilled an art assignment to create a poster on an emotionally charged issue, an effort to teach students about political advertising. The objector received complaints about the posters, which also addressed gun control, animal rights and other issues, and after reviewing

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them ordered the two abortion posters taken down. When the parents of the two students complained about the removal, the superintendent ordered the teacher to remove the rest of the posters as well. Although student artwork is normally displayed in the school's hallway, the superintendent restricted display of the posters to a social studies classroom. The students, however, chose not to relocate the works after their removal. Instead, they founded a forensics club, selecting freedom of speech as the first topic of discussion.

INCIDENT: In Hudson Falls, objections to *A Boy's Life* by Robert McCammon, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* by Neil Simon, and *Native Son* by Richard Wright for objectionable language, sexual content, and "recurring themes of a disturbing nature." All of the books were approved for use in a ninth-grade advanced placement English class; however, only *A Boy's Life* and *The Chocolate War* were in use in the classroom. The complainant requested the removal of these books and objected to "any such additional materials that may be selected in the future for use in this, or any other class in the school system."

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members calling themselves Citizens Advocating Responsible Education.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 5-4 and 6-3 to uphold the superintendent's decision retaining *A Boy's Life* and *The Chocolate War*, and 8-1 to require that any future use of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* be restricted to eleventh grade and up. *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Native Son* were not considered because the approved texts were edited versions and did not contain the passages cited as objectionable in the complaint.

In response to the incident, the superintendent proposed changes in the book selection process for the class, requiring a yearly meeting in which parents review potential materials. In the future, if objections are not worked out by consensus, material can be rejected by a vote of as few as forty percent of parents. Said the leader of CARE, "Public institutions have a responsibility, when dealing with wide ranges of material, to respond by offering that which is least offensive to...anyone in the group, because they are effectively forcing people to deal with things that they may not be ready or willing to deal with. Compare this to people who support legalizing drugs...in this case, drugs would not only be legal, but you would be required to use them!"

INCIDENT: In central New York, objections to *Nightmares* by Jack Prelutsky, a poetry book available in elementary school libraries, for allegedly satanic content. Removal requested. Fearing reprisal, the source asked that the name of the community be withheld.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book, rejecting the objector's claim that there are hidden satanic meanings in the words and numbers of the poems.

INCIDENT: In Mohawk, objections to *The Lemonade Trick* by Scott Corbett, available in an elementary classroom library, for encouraging students to speak to strangers and disobey parents. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted unanimously to retain the book. The district reconsideration policy was being revised at the time. In accordance with the old policy, the book was pulled from the shelf during review, but the new policy specifies that challenged materials remain in use during review.

INCIDENT: In New York City, in a 4-3 vote, the board of education gutted the city's multicultural curriculum, eliminating sexual orientation, age, gender, religion and disability from the program that was established in 1989, and placing them in a separate curriculum that would only discuss laws and regulations that protect such people from discrimination. The board of education president initiated the changes in the policy, rekindling a debate over the *Children of the Rainbow* curriculum that divided the city two years ago and resulted in the removal of the chancellor for including a lesson on respect for gay families.

Saying that she was "strengthening" the curriculum, the board president narrowed the scope of multicultural education to ethnic, racial or linguistic groups. Claiming that all people would be covered under the umbrella of the revised curriculum, the president said, "Whether they speak English or Creole or whatever, it seems to be that everybody is part of a linguistic or racial or ethnic group, no matter whether they are disabled or old or part of another group."

Over 50 people participated in several hours of debate following the vote, many of whom spoke out against the decision, calling it "a tremendous step back for the cause of recognizing diversity, ending bigotry and celebrating difference." Many felt it was a deliberate effort to remove sexual orientation from the classroom. One board member said, "The reason they're doing this is to respond to the pressure of the religious right to get rid of the inclusion of gays in our multicultural policy. They're not strengthening multicultural education. They're weakening it, by excluding categories of individuals."

INCIDENT: In Pine Bush, objections to *Taming the Star Runner* by S.E. Hinton, in use as a suggested book in an eighth-grade reading class, for containing profanity and a suggestion of homosexual prison sex. Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee of parents, teachers, librarians, and administrators voted unanimously to retain the book on the reading list.

INCIDENT: In Pound Ridge, objections to the game *Magic: The Gathering*, being played by elementary school students in the mornings before school, on the grounds that it is "morally harmful and detrimental to behavior." Removal from school grounds requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and a lawyer from the community, supported by the Christian Coalition and Concerned Women for America.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to permit the game in the school.

After meeting with objectors, the superintendent issued a temporary 30-day ban on playing *Magic* at school. Among objectors' complaints: the game is "grotesque" and "destructive," and "it pits evil against evil." The parent who organized the game disagreed and asserted that it promotes critical thinking: "It's a wonderful, intricate, mathematical card game...The cards which are being questioned are being taken very much out of context. [The game's] being declared guilty without full understanding. It's as wholesome as can be."

The superintendent appointed three psychiatrists to examine the game and its possible effects on children. At the invitation of one of the objectors, another psychiatrist offered a disapproving opinion, arguing that "When you begin to deal with the occult, you open yourself up to a lot of forces." The final conclusion of the school board was that the game poses no risk to children and could even have a positive influence on creativity and imagination.

Meanwhile, the local Christian Coalition sent out a survey to some school board candidates asking about their positions on *Magic* in the schools. The objectors have formed a grassroots organization called the Association Against the Seduction of Children, supported by the Christian Coalition and Concerned Women for America. An objecting parent has threatened to fight the board's ruling to lift the ban and reportedly told the superintendent that she would see to it that he is remembered as "the superintendent who promoted satanism in the schools." The other objector, a lawyer, has threatened a lawsuit against the board.

While the ban was in effect, a local Presbyterian church hosted a *Magic* tournament that was open to the public, so people could participate or observe. Some school board members attended.

A series of novels based on *Magic* is underway; the first has been published and was written by William Forstchen, co-author of Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich's recent novel, *1945*.

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INCIDENT: In Queens, a school board member proposed a resolution that the school district purchase fourteen "pro-American" books for elementary and middle school library or classroom use. During the 1993-94 school year, this same school board member had objected to four multicultural books in an elementary school library, for being "anti-American," and "discouraging assimilation." His explanation for the current resolution stated, "It is anticipated that these books, with their Eurocentric, pro-American emphasis will provide students in [this school district] with an accurate account of American history. These books, which stress the Christian influence of the great explorers and the Founding Fathers, will also serve as a balance to the materials presently in the schools." The school board voted to postpone the resolution indefinitely.

INCIDENT: In Watertown, objections to *Queen of the Summer Stars* by Persia Woolley, available in a junior high school library, for "inappropriate" references to incest, rape and adultery. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to remove the book from the library shelf, but to allow students who request the book by title to check it out from the library. Before filing a formal complaint, the objector sent school officials nine photocopied pages of objectionable content from the book to justify its removal. School officials refused to remove the book without a formal review process. The objector then filed a formal complaint and said, "It's not just for my sake; it's a moral issue. We all should be trying to bring up the standards in our schools."

NORTH CAROLINA

STATE OVERVIEW

In Raleigh, a school board policy allowing prior review of non-school sponsored student publications was challenged by students in a lawsuit claiming their constitutional rights were violated. A Rockingham County school board violated state procedure when it removed the book *I Want to Keep My Baby* without a public hearing, in response to objections by a parent backed by the Christian Coalition, for containing "anti-religious sentiments."

INCIDENT: In Kings Mountain, during a review of the district's health and sexuality education curriculum for middle school students, a group of parents and community members objected to revising the comprehensive program currently in place, and suggested that either it be replaced with an abstinence-only program, "such as *Sex Respect*," or that such a program be taught in addition to the comprehensive curriculum. The Kings Mountain Ministerial Association, along with some local churches, offered to pay for the abstinence-only curriculum and one of its proponents said, "God says without a doubt, that the body is to be sexually pure. Sex education is contrary to the Word of God."

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After holding a series of public meetings to receive community input, the Health Council reached a consensus and adopted the comprehensive *Values and Choices* program as the sexuality education resource. Parents who do not wish for their children to participate in the comprehensive program have the opportunity to "opt out" of the sexuality education curriculum.

INCIDENT: In Raleigh, a school district asserted its authority to review non-school sponsored student publications prior to distribution. Five students had filed for an injunction against the school district, superintendent, principal and two assistant principals, charging that the prior review policy violates students' constitutional rights. The school district settled out-of-court and agreed to suspend its prior review policy for non-school publications for one year, after which time it may be reinstated if students are given notice.

The lawsuit followed a controversy during the 1993-94 school year in which another group of students was suspended for distributing a student-sponsored pamphlet condemning homophobia, without having submitted it for review, allegedly violating both the review policy and another policy that prohibits causing a disturbance. The suspensions were later overturned by the school board, but the incident led to the enforcement of an existing but not previously enforced policy of prior review of all student publications, including an underground literary magazine produced by the students seeking the injunction.

INCIDENT: In Rockingham County, objections to *I Want to Keep My Baby* by Joanna Lee, available in a high school library, for "anti-religious sentiments." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent with support from the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: Overturning a previous decision to remove the book, the school board voted 6-1 to reinstate the book in libraries throughout the district. The school board initially removed the book in response to a complaint from a parent who claimed the book was blasphemy and contributed to the moral degradation of the nation. But the board, in violation of state law, failed to announce publicly the hearing at which it voted to remove. In response to complaints from outraged parents, the board agreed to hold a second hearing. Despite strong opposition from members of the Christian Coalition and home-school advocates, the community overwhelmingly supported returning the book to library shelves. Of the 28 speakers who addressed the board, 21 urged them to return the book to the shelf and when the vote to retain the book was taken, the crowd of over 200 people erupted in a standing ovation.

INCIDENT: In Tarboro, objections to *Death Be Not Proud* by John Gunther, in use in ninth-grade English, for alleged bias against Christianity and use of profanity, specifically two uses of the word "Goddamn." Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parents and a local pastor.

RESOLUTION: A school board committee voted 5-1 to uphold unanimous recommendations from a three-member school board committee and an ad hoc committee to retain the book. This school year, the primary objector to *Death Be Not Proud* did not like the textbooks used in her daughter's social studies class. The objector was invited to challenge these books formally, but instead changed her daughter's class and chose to challenge *Death Be Not Proud*, in use in a ninth-grade English class that her daughter had taken two years prior. Her stated reason was to "protect all children in the school district."

Her original objection to the book was that it was biased against Christianity because it mentioned Buddhism and Hinduism. She later modified her complaint charging that the book was profane. She collected 1,352 signatures for two petitions requesting that teachers "stop assigning books with profanity" or "obtain parents' permission before assigning such books." A local pastor also opposed to the use of profanity stated, "This book has words in it that even unsaved people would have spanked their children for saying. Take this book out of the system completely. You say they need to know — they don't need to know. Our country is headed to hell because of the devil and his language. We have to turn this trend around." According to a school board member, "We have a very professional body of people who examined this book and verified that it was acceptable and clear for student reading. A student using profanity can't be compared to the publication of this book."

STATE OVERVIEW

NORTH DAKOTA

In Grand Forks, a principal ordered a student's religious poster removed from a school hallway because of religious content.

INCIDENT: In Grand Forks, objections to a poster of a cross, an American flag and the question, "Is the Son shining in your school?" created by a tenth-grade student as an art assignment to design a poster about an issue of concern in the community, for allegedly violating the separation of church and state. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The principal ordered that the student's religious poster be removed from the school hallway, where it hung alongside her classmates' posters on drugs, AIDS, abortion and the environment, saying that the religious content of the assignment violated the separation of church and state. The student, whose teacher had given her a perfect grade on the assignment, strongly disagreed with the principal's contention that her poster has somehow violated other students' religious liberties. Other students agreed. "That's just dumb. It's sup-

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posed to be your opinion on what you want to do it on." While the entire display was taken down two days after the objectionable poster was removed, attorneys were consulted to develop specific guidelines as to what constitutes the separation of church and state. The attorneys issued a statement to clarify the Establishment Clause: "Students may express their religious beliefs in the form of reports, homework and artwork, and such expressions are constitutionally protected. Teachers may not reject or correct such submissions simply because they include a religious symbol or address religious themes. Likewise, teachers may not require students to modify, include or excise religious views in their assignments, if germane. These assignments should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance, relevance, appearance and grammar."

INCIDENT: In North Dakota, a Parental Rights Amendment was introduced in the state legislature which sought to ensure that the "rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." The House Joint Constitutional Revisions Committee held a public hearing on the proposed amendment, which did not pass in this legislative session.

Opponents of the initiative contend that the amendment is unnecessary on the grounds that the Supreme Court has already ruled that parental rights are protected under the Fourteenth Amendment. Many opposed to the amendment are concerned that the bill poses a threat to existing child labor laws, and puts children at risk by making it harder to investigate and prosecute child abuse. Opponents also raise concerns that the amendment would aid would-be censors by giving parents veto power over all library selections and classroom materials, giving one parent the power to have materials removed regardless of other parents' wishes.

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STATE OVERVIEW

In Circleville, a review committee recommended blackening out "profane" words in *Where the Red Fern Grows*, in use in a fifth-grade classroom. A school board member, who is also a member of the local chapter of Citizens for Excellence in Education in Hudson, objected to the proposed adoption of *World History: The Human Experience* because it presented Creationism as a myth. A school board member in Marion ordered a high school principal to cover the projector during scenes that contain nudity or violence during a showing of *Schindler's List*. Governor Voinovich signed into law a voucher program that will allow parents in Cleveland to divert funds from the public school system to send their children to private and religious schools.

INCIDENT: In Bedford, objections to a Halloween party, in a third- through fifth-grade intermediate school, based on "personal, moral and religious beliefs." Cancellation requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) board voted unanimously to cancel this year's Halloween party, but later reversed its decision. Parents had been notified of the cancellation; purportedly due to "questions and concerns" about the Halloween party, as well as the PTA's concern about the expense. Following parent protest of the decision, the PTA surveyed parents and determined that most wanted the Halloween party; it was reinstated. According to a school official, at previous Halloween parties students had come to school dressed as bums and ax murderers, but this school year school officials tried "to encourage more positive role models."

INCIDENT: In Canal Winchester, objections to *More Scary Stories To Tell In the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, for containing allegedly age-inappropriate violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent and librarian.

RESOLUTION: After the parent brought the book to the librarian's attention, the librarian agreed that the book contained "unnecessary" violence. Though the parent did not file a formal complaint, the librarian removed the book from the library shelves.

INCIDENT: In Cincinnati, objections to *Maybe Right, Maybe Wrong* by Dan Barker, available in a middle school library, on the grounds that it is "New Age."

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: In response to the objector's complaint, the librarian removed the book from the library. The school reconsideration policy gives the librarian the option to respond to challenges first. The librarian, upon reviewing the book, decided to remove it not because it is "New Age" but because "the author did not allow for differences of opinion" and referred to "a god" instead of "God."

INCIDENT: In Circleville, objections to *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls, in use in fifth-grade Reading, for "too much violence" and profane language, specifically the use of "damn" and "hell" five times throughout the book. When asked the theme of the book, the objector stated, "I don't care and neither should you." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A school level committee recommended using a marker to cross out words that were used as "profanity." Descriptive words in the text such as

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"hellish night" and "demons of hell" were retained. Words used as "profanity" have been covered with a marker, and the book is available for classroom use.

INCIDENT: In Englewood, a school board, prompted by the faculty advisor to the student prayer club, issued a memo declaring that "a brief period of silent prayer" would be observed on the National Day of Prayer during morning announcements at the high school. A teacher at the school contacted People For the American Way for assistance, and she and more than a dozen other teachers and counselors at the school authorized a letter to be sent on their behalf from People For to the school board and the superintendent that expressed "support for religious liberty, including both the right to free exercise of religion and the separation of church and state" and opposition to the school-sponsored prayer on the grounds that such action would violate the Constitution and the First Amendment rights of students and teachers at the school. Other teachers who learned of the letter after it had been sent called the superintendent and told him to consider their names added to it. The principal canceled the proposed plan that day.

INCIDENT: In Grove City, the school board voted unanimously to reverse an earlier vote to add material on Creationism and "Darwinism" to the district's science course of study. The original vote came after a board member proposed adding definitions of Creationism, Darwinism, and the Big Bang theory to the glossary of the district's science text. The board initially approved, but when members discovered that teachers had not approved of the additions, they voted to remove them. The additions had defined Creationism as "The theory that biological organisms owe their origin to a preexistent intelligence," and Darwinism as,"The theory that all living things descended from an original common ancestor through natural selection and random variation."

Said the school board member who had proposed the addition, "When I saw the word 'evolution' used throughout [the text], I had concerns about it....My goal was not to just promote Creationism. It was just to introduce all theories." Although the board member denies that he is "formally involved" with the local chapter of the Religious Right group, Citizens for Excellence in Education, a local teacher noted that "[t]heir influence has been felt in the science course of study."

INCIDENT: In Hudson, objections to *World History: The Human Experience*, a textbook proposed for adoption in tenth-grade world history classes, for teaching that "Creation is not a correct statement." The challenged passage discussed various Creation myths throughout history. Rejection of textbook requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member who is a member of the local chapter of Citizens for Excellence in Education.

RESOLUTION: The objector's motion to reject the textbook from the approval list failed by a 3-2 vote and the text has been adopted.

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INCIDENT: In Hudson, objections to a biology textbook, proposed for adoption in high school biology, for not including Creationism as part of a discussion on evolution. Rejection of textbook requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member who is a member of the local chapter of Citizens for Excellence in Education.

RESOLUTION: As this report went to press a school board meeting was planned at which members were to discuss objections to the textbook and determine whether or not it would be adopted for classroom use.

INCIDENT: In Lima, objections to *Literature*, published by Prentice-Hall, in use in sixth-grade reading classes, for containing stories that were an "introduction into New Age Mysticism" and would allegedly cause the objector's child "to become interested or involved in things contrary to beliefs he is being raised in." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee recommended retaining the book. Alternative materials will be provided for the objector's child.

INCIDENT: In Lima, objections to *Skills for Adolescence*, a self-esteem program in use in sixth-grade classes, for being "touchy-feely." The objector specifically objected to an activity in which children wrote positive remarks on sheets of paper attached to each others' backs. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: After a parent challenged the program at the Parent-Teacher Association meeting and threatened to go to the school board with her objections, the principal asked the teachers if they wanted the program. The teachers decided to drop the program in order to avert a challenge.

INCIDENT: In Louisville, the Origins Committee, a local group advocating Creationism, submitted a proposal to the school board that 100 copies of the pro-Creationism "science" textbook, *Of Pandas and People* by Dean Kenyon, be adopted as supplemental textbooks in seventh- and tenth-grade biology classes. The group also hired an attorney from the Rutherford Institute to argue that the book was constitutional. The school board ultimately voted to accept the donated copies but withdrew a motion that would have reintroduced Creationism into science classes. The board said that the books would go in the library, but amended the resolution so that the number of books was not specified. The books were not approved for use in science classes. Said one board member, "If we are not going to put this in the curriculum, and we are not, then we don't have the need for all those books."

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INCIDENT: In Marion, objections to the film *Schindler's List*, directed by Steven Spielberg, to be shown to high school students as part of a cross-curriculum assignment, for violence and nudity. Covering of the projector during such scenes requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and a school board member.

RESOLUTION: Despite the fact that permission slips were distributed to parents before the film was to be shown to students, a school board member ordered the principal to cover the projector during scenes which contain nudity or violence. Because the students were scheduled to view the film in a public movie theater, the film company that produced *Schindler's List* notified the school that the film was not to be shown in any edited form. The film was then shown, uncut, to more than 500 students in the movie theater.

INCIDENT: In Morral, objections to *Ordinary People* by Judith Guest, available in a high school library and on the recommended reading list in a ninth-grade class, for containing profanity and references to suicide. Removal from reading list and library requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the library and on the reading list, since no students were required to read the book.

INCIDENT: In Richmond, objections to *The Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, in use in a fifth-grade reading class, for containing words such as "lord" and "naked." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A formal complaint has been filed against the book, but no decision had been made as this report went to press.

INCIDENT: In Streetsboro, objections to the sex education curriculum in use in fifth-grade Family Living classes, for allegedly promoting sexual behavior. Removal of all references to sexual intercourse, separate teaching of boys and girls, and relocation of program to the middle school level requested.

OBJECTOR: Group of parents.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent and the school board heard input from various parties and declined to take formal action, maintaining that, according to research, the fifth grade is the appropriate time to provide information about sex to students. The curriculum remains in place.

The twelve-week, non-credit course is taught by a nurse and has been in the district's curriculum for 15 years. It is not required for students, and parents can opt their children out at any time. One of the objectors had removed her child from the course but argued, "Taking him out of the class doesn't stop him from finding out." She teaches her son how to avoid contracting AIDS but avoids describing the sex act. A parent in support of the Family Living course wondered, "How can you tell kids to avoid sexual activity if they don't know what sexual activity is?" She also noted, "By the time children are physically capable of having sex, they need to know the facts."

INCIDENT: In Stryker, objections to Halloween festivities at an elementary school, for promoting the occult and devil worship. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Members of a local church.

RESOLUTION: After years of the objectors complaining and keeping their children home from school on Halloween, the festivities in grades kindergarten through three were canceled for the first time ever. The K-3 teachers decided to eliminate Halloween parties, songs, costumes and art projects from their classrooms. The upper grades had their Halloween activities as usual.

INCIDENT: In Summit County, objections to *The Dumb Bunnies* by Sue Denim, available in a kindergarten through second-grade library, for a "sarcastic view of humor." The objector wrote that, as a result of reading the book, "children will learn negative, disrespectful and violent behavior instead of more acceptable behavior in our society." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to move the book to a library serving students in grades three through five, concluding that the book's use of irony and sophisticated humor were more suited for older children.

INCIDENT: In Ohio, a challenge to Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* and to its film adaptation, in use in an eleventh-grade English class, for profanity and nudity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee retained the novel but recommended that the nudity in the film be edited.

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INCIDENT: In Ohio, objections to *Go Ask Alice* by an anonymous author, available to seventh-grade students from a teacher's personal library collection, and the film *The Last of the Mohicans*, directed by Michael Mann, shown to a seventh-grade history class, for containing inappropriate language and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Local church group.

RESOLUTION: After the objectors addressed the school board with their complaint, the school board voted to restrict *Go Ask Alice* to students with parental permission and to change district policy to prohibit the showing of R-rated movies.

INCIDENT: In Ohio, Governor Voinovich signed into law a voucher program as part of the budget bill passed by the state legislature in July. Under this legislation, parents are now able to divert funds from the public education system in order to send their children to private and religious schools, raising questions about the constitutionality of a law that many see as a violation of the separation of church and state. Lawmakers in favor of vouchers based their defense of the legislation on a Supreme Court ruling in which an Arizona couple successfully sued the state in order to get a sign language interpreter, paid for with state funds, assigned to their deaf child, whom they had transferred to a religious school. The executive director of the Ohio chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union denounced the use of that case as justification for a state education plan which would fund religious schools. "Circumventing the U.S. Constitution on a technicality isn't my sense of democracy," she said.

OKLAHOMA

STATE OVERVIEW

In Forgan, a challenge to the film *Schindler's List* resulted in the immediate removal of the film and a ban on future use of R-rated films. Two seventh-grade books, *A Day No Pigs Would Die* and *That Was Then, This is Now*, were removed from classrooms this year as the result of challenges in Pawhuska.

INCIDENT: In Broken Arrow, objections to *Crabapple Night* by Jan Wahl, available in an elementary school library, for promoting "revenge and vandalism" and for containing "a very sarcastic undercurrent." The book "blatantly promotes behavior that no parent would approve of," wrote the objector. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the library. The committee noted that "the book does not promote vengeance and vandalism, it tells about these things. In the end the children feel badly about their treatment of the old lady and come to understand her better."

INCIDENT: In Forgan, objections to *Schindler's List*, directed by Steven Spielberg, being shown to an eleventh-grade American history class, for nudity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: In the absence of a formal reconsideration policy, the film was immediately removed following a complaint to the superintendent by one parent. After half of the Academy Award-winning film was shown to the class, a student told her mother that the film contained nudity. The objector complained to the superintendent about the film, in which a German officer is shown climbing out of bed with a topless woman and then standing on his balcony, randomly shooting Jews in the camp below him. The teacher offered to excuse the student from the film, but the superintendent ordered that the rest of the film not be shown and that it be removed from school property. He also forbade the showing of any R-rated films in the future.

INCIDENT: In Pawhuska, objections to *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck, in use in a seventh-grade reading class, for "making fun of religion," "cruelty to animals," and "talking about the details of mating." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book, but the objector appealed to the school board. As of the end of the school year, the board had not made any decision concerning the book.

As a result of the challenge and the fact that the book was removed from the classroom during the review process, the review policy was examined, and it was determined that challenged materials should remain in use during reconsideration. One educator pointed out, however, that the outcome of the review process and the clarification of the policy are moot for this school year, since her students did not have the opportunity to read this book in class. "[The objectors] have won," she said. The objectors in both Pawhuska challenges this year are planning to home-school their children next year, according to one source.

INCIDENT: In Pawhuska, objections to *That Was Then, This is Now* by S.E. Hinton, in use in a seventh-grade reading class, for references to "drinking, drugs, stealing, hot-wiring cars, smoking, violence, gangs, improper grammar" and for leaving the reader "with a sense of hopelessness." Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to remove the book from the classroom. It is still available for use in the school library.

INCIDENT: In Tulsa, objections to *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam, available in district elementary school libraries, for alleged satanic content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The review committee voted unanimously to retain the book in the district library collection. While committee members were aware of the sensitive nature of the book, they felt that there were "no true satanic undercurrents" and that the book was "just about Halloween."

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STATE OVERVIEW

With 23 incidents, Oregon faced a broad variety of attacks this school year. The Oregon Citizens Alliance objected to an off-campus workshop promoting AIDS education and healthy sexual behaviors in Beaverton, and was successful in removing Planned Parenthood's pregnancy-prevention program in Bend. A former neo-Nazi was not allowed to deliver an anti-Aryan Nation speech in Cave Junction. Other materials challenged include *The Color Purple*, books by Maurice Sendak and *Seventeen* magazine.

INCIDENT: In Albany, objections to *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte, in use in a ninth-grade Language Arts/Social Studies class, for ethnic references, specifically the word "nigger." Objectors felt the book was unworthy after the first fifteen pages. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee reached a consensus that the book should be retained.

INCIDENT: In Beaver, objections to *In The Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, available in an elementary school library, for containing an illustration of a nude child. Parental warning sticker on the book requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: A review committee voted unanimously to retain the Caldecott Honor nominee without a parental warning sticker.

INCIDENT: In Beaverton, objections to a video and a presentation covering homosexuality, AIDS and condom use, at an off-campus workshop for eighth-grade boys, entitled "A New Attitude: Promoting Healthy Behaviors in a High Risk Society," for being offensive and inappropriate. Some of the boys who attended the workshop claimed they were encouraged during the presentation to "have at least two homosexual experiences." One of the objectors stated, "That an incident like this was allowed to happen is intolerable." He expressed the view that keeping homosexuality out of the schools is "more important than so-called political correctness or diversity." Request for an investigation of the presentation and for the district to hold a session to "debrief" the seminar attendees because "they should be shown the other side of what homosexuality is."

OBJECTOR: Parents and the Oregon Citizens Alliance.

RESOLUTION: After the seminar (held at the end of the 1993-94 school year) and the objections that followed, an investigation by the school district, concluded this year, found that the presentation did not encourage the eighth-grade students to have homosexual experiences. The discussion of homosexuality, AIDS, and condom use was not, however, in accordance with the district's abstinence-based sex education guidelines. The 130 eighth-grade boys who attended the seminar on male responsibility for teen pregnancy, sexual harassment, and stereotyping of male roles in advertising had received parental permission to participate. Parents were invited to preview the workshop material, and only three parents attended.

The presenter, who is also an instructor in the school district, had not been advised of school district guidelines for the seminar and was not disciplined. Some objectors, unhappy with the investigation's results, picketed the instructor in protest. Pleased that the investigation supported his version of events, the instructor responded, "If abstinence is the only piece of education being taught to students, we are sticking our heads in the sand. Because kids out there are sexually active."

INCIDENT: In Bend, objections to Planned Parenthood's *Teen Talk*, a pregnancy-prevention program proposed for use in district schools for 9-12 year-olds, on the grounds that it would promote pregnancy, use teen-aged mentors to teach sensitive topics, and that it is affiliated with Planned Parenthood. Rejection of program requested.

OBJECTOR: Members of the district Health Advisory Committee, parents and community members, and members of the Oregon Citizens Alliance and the Bend Ministerial Association.

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RESOLUTION: As a result of community debate and uproar raised by the objectors over the proposed program and the involvement of Planned Parenthood in the schools, the Health Advisory Committee recommended that the program be rejected, and the school board accepted that recommendation. The board passed a motion that the Health Advisory Committee reevaluate the health education curriculum currently in place and develop its own recommendations for reducing teen pregnancy. In the meantime, parts of the *Teen Talk* program may be used in the context of the district health curriculum, but Planned Parenthood can only offer its own workshops as part of an after-school program not affiliated with the school district.

INCIDENT: In Canby, objections to *Outside Over There* and *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, available in an elementary school library, for alleged nudity and possible contributions to sexual abuse. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted unanimously to retain both books. Members of the committee consulted professionals at a local sexual assault resource center, and concluded that there is no causal connection between children's books and persons who abuse children.

INCIDENT: In Cave Junction, objections to allowing a reformed white supremacist to address high school and middle school students in a community that is battling neo-Nazi recruitment, for being too controversial. Cancellation requested.

OBJECTOR: Superintendent and school board.

RESOLUTION: In the wake of increased local Aryan Nation activity, members of the Illinois Valley Human Rights Alliance arranged for a former recruiter for the church of Jesus Christ Christian-Aryan Nation to speak to middle and high school students who would be likely targets of recruitment by the white supremacist organization. But the superintendent refused to allow the former neo-Nazi to deliver his anti-Aryan Nation message to the students; she claimed that to do so would violate district policy requiring the presentation of both sides of controversial issues. The Illinois Valley Human Rights alliance investigated the district policy and found no regulation requiring that equal access be given to complex social issues. They argued that drug abuse education was not countered by proponents of drug legalization.

In addition, community members were outraged that someone who could prevent their children from being seduced into an organization whose literature states, "White power! Make Oregon a white state!" would be barred from the school. One said, "Now we're left with a scenario where we're the only county in Oregon that's been targeted by Aryan Nation recruiting...And we have the only school district in Oregon that won't allow [the speaker] in the schools." Parents were

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shocked that the school board supported the superintendent's recommendation not to allow the speech to be given in the school, and resented the fact that the speaker's important message went unheard because it was deemed too controversial. The speech was ultimately given in the evening at a local church. While about 30 teachers and one board member heard the evening address, only a handful of students attended.

INCIDENT: In Eagle Point, objections to *The Sorcerer's Scrapbook* by Michael Berenstain, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly teaching occultic practices of witchcraft, sorcery, and horoscopes, and for being age-inappropriate. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee reached a consensus decision to remove the book from the elementary school library, grades kindergarten through two, and reassign it to an intermediate school library, grades three through six.

INCIDENT: In Eugene, objections to *Abel's Island* by William Steig, in use in third-grade reading, for alleged "conjugal love" and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to uphold a review committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Eugene, objections to *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, in use in an advanced fifth-grade reading class, for alleged inappropriate subject matter and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board reached a consensus decision to uphold a review committee's recommendation to retain the 1994 Newbery Award-winning book.

INCIDENT: In Gold Beach, objections to *Seventeen* magazine, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A library review committee voted unanimously to retain *Seventeen*. In the "Sex and Body" column of the magazine, a reader wrote to the columnist

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expressing concern and asking how one can determine if he or she is gay, and the columnist suggested that one's sexuality develops over time. The objector felt the columnist's response encouraged experimentation and sexual activity.

INCIDENT: In Gresham, objections to *The Headless Horseman Rides Tonight: More Poems to Trouble Your Sleep* by Jack Prelutsky, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly satanic and occultic evil stories and short poems. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book, but not to include it in a special display of library books at Halloween.

INCIDENT: In Hood River, objections to *Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly offensive and occultic content that would frighten young children. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee reached a consensus decision to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Junction City, objections to *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, in use in an elective twelfth-grade English class, for alleged graphic language and pornographic content. One of the objectors stated that she read only portions of the book before she became "saturated with the filth of it." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: A local minister and members of a local group called Parents for Academic Excellence.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 5-2 to retain the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, upholding the superintendent's decision and a review committee's 5-1 recommendation. In accordance with school policy, students in this elective class who object to an assigned reading can request an alternative reading assignment. A primary objector claimed, "*The Color Purple* is so foul that we don't believe it belongs in the public school system at all." The book allegedly advocates "perverse, destructive values" because of its profanity, descriptions of sex and "even has God condoning lesbian sex." The teacher refused a request from an objector to read a paragraph from *The Color Purple* out loud to him and asserted, "The

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book is not defined by a single sentence or paragraph. It's the development of a character, and you can't do that in a sentence, which is why Alice Walker didn't." The teacher reportedly received letters, flowers and phone calls of support from around the country. "I've never felt so supported as a teacher," she said.

INCIDENT: In Redmond, objections to *The Devil's Storybook* by Natalie Babbitt, available in a K-6 library, for allegedly depicting Satan "as simply a bumbling, mischievous prankster" rather than "completely evil." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee recommended that the book be moved to a middle school library rather than being removed completely. It was removed from both elementary school libraries in the district.

INCIDENT: In Redmond, objections to the award-winning play *Equus* by Peter Shaffer, on the list of required reading in a tenth-grade honors English class, for "foul language, sexual messages and affronts to Christianity." Removal from the required reading list requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided that the book's language is inappropriate for sophomores and voted to place the book on the supplemental reading list for the class and to require students to get parental permission to read it. One parent objected to the committee's decision: "Do we consider high school students so immature that they cannot be responsible for their own reading? This is an outrage," she said.

INCIDENT: In Redmond, objections to *Growing Up in the Age of AIDS*, a nationally broadcast ABC news program on AIDS and AIDS education, being viewed in a twelfth-grade course covering AIDS, on the grounds that it does not emphasize abstinence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Various school officials reviewed the video after objectors brought it to the principal, the superintendent, and the school board. They determined that it was appropriate for seniors and met Oregon state requirements for AIDS education. The program consisted of a town meeting led by anchor Peter Jennings; it dramatized the realities of HIV infection and demonstrated the proper use of a condom. According to one educator, the program was "well done." "The issues are serious ones that need contemplation and discussion," he said. "To deny that [information] to seniors is ridiculous."

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INCIDENT: In Salem, objections to *Refuge* by Terry Tempest Williams, in use in tenth-grade English as a supplemental text, for questioning religion and containing factual inaccuracies on Mormon doctrine. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted 6-1 to retain the book. The school board vote is pending.

INCIDENT: In Salem, objections to the song "Witches Brew" by Happ Palmer and Martha Palmer, performed by kindergarten students at a Halloween classroom presentation, for being a "song about the sin of witchcraft, which is religion." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to uphold a review committee's recommendation that the song be retained.

INCIDENT: In Sandy, objections to *The Headless Horseman Rides Tonight: More Poems to Trouble Your Sleep* by Jack Prelutsky, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly being "evil." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted to retain the book, unrestricted, in the library collection. The school board upheld the committee's decision.

INCIDENT: In Springfield, objections to science textbooks, under consideration for adoption, for not containing Creationism. The objectors requested that the board postpone the adoption decision and look for textbooks that included Creationism.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 3-2 to adopt the proposed science textbooks.

INCIDENT: In West Linn, objections to *Jumper* by Steven Gould, available in a middle school library, for sexual violence. According to the objector, "When I read it, I felt like I'd been kicked in the stomach." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to uphold a review committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Oregon, objections to the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, a statewide comprehensive school reform plan, approved by the state legislature in 1992 for use in 1997, based on allegations that it is transformational outcome based education that shuts parents out of schools. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Citizens for Academic Excellence, Parents for Academic Excellence, Oregon Citizens Alliance.

RESOLUTION: The state legislature voted 71-19 to restore and strengthen the 1992 school reform law. Revisions bolstered statewide testing, emphasized academics, retained certificates of mastery to document student abilities and the work training program. School districts were given more flexibility to meet timeline reforms, and parent and teacher involvement is encouraged. An objector with Citizens for Academic Excellence stated, "It is not the school's place to change kids' values. It's a waste of time to ask kids how they feel about this or that, instead of learning." Citizens for Academic Excellence is continuing efforts to repeal the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century. They plan to collect 73,000 signatures to place a measure on the November 1996 statewide ballot that, if passed, would repeal the law and require the 1997 Legislature to design a new educational system "based on academic excellence." Supporters of the petition drive have announced that the Oregon Christian Coalition will be aiding their efforts.

INCIDENT: In Oregon, a Parental Rights Amendment was introduced in the state Senate. The amendment sought to ensure that the "rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." The state Senate held two public hearings, but no Senate vote was taken.

Opponents of the initiative argue that the Supreme Court has ruled that parental rights are already protected under the Fourteenth Amendment, making the amendment unnecessary. Many have also expressed concern about the degree to which it would aid would-be censors by giving parents veto power over all library selections and classroom materials, giving one parent the power to have books and materials removed regardless of other parents' wishes. In addition, opponents believe that the amendment could put children at risk by weakening existing labor laws and making it harder to investigate and prosecute child abuse.

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STATE OVERVIEW

A school board member in Morrisville succeeded in getting Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* removed from a high school English class due to its profanity and sexual content. In Greensburg, *Literature in Society*, a 1,500-page anthology, was removed from an English class after a parent assisted by the Christian Coalition and United We Stand complained that the book contained offensive language and vulgar themes. In Boyertown, Arthur Dorros' *This Is My House* was removed from a list of 252 books proposed for adoption because school board members, offended by the book's references to homeless people, threatened to vote the entire list down for a fourth time. Other challenged materials include *The Monster Riddle Book*, *Supernatural Tales of Terror and Suspense*, *The Giver*, *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, *Killing Mr. Griffin* and *Human Sexuality Today*.

INCIDENT: In Armstrong County, objections to *Hosie's Alphabet* by Leonard Baskin, available in a kindergarten through sixth-grade library, for containing an illustration of a goblin.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: Following an informal complaint and in violation of district reconsideration policy, the principal pulled the book from the shelf.

INCIDENT: In Armstrong County, objections to *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl, available in a kindergarten through sixth-grade library, for containing profanity such as the word "ass."

OBJECTOR: Parent and principal.

RESOLUTION: Following an informal complaint from a parent and in violation of the district reconsideration policy, the principal pulled the book off the shelf.

INCIDENT: In Boyertown, objections to *Making Life Choices - Health Skills/Concepts*, a textbook proposed for use in tenth-grade health education courses, for containing references to homosexuality, masturbation, and contraception. Rejection requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member who is a member of Boyertown Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers Association, a group with links to Citizens for Excellence in Education.

RESOLUTION: The motion to adopt the textbook failed for lack of a second. Said the objector, "This textbook...alludes to the fact that adolescents are having same

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sex experiences. It refers to those who do not condone homosexuality as homophobics." In a letter to the local paper, one citizen in favor of the textbook wrote, "If a student sees the word 'homosexual,' will they want to go and have a homosexual experience? Perhaps [the objector] would like to censor history textbooks also, because when a student sees the words 'war' or 'weapon,' he or she might want to go to war or use a weapon."

Making Life Choices - Health Skills/Concepts is now off of the list of textbooks proposed for adoption, and there is currently no textbook in use in tenth-grade health education classes. A committee is reviewing the district's sex education materials in an effort to overhaul the curriculum at all grade levels.

INCIDENT: In Boyertown, objections to the local strategic plan for implementing outcome based education guidelines mandated by the state, for being "vague, attitudinal, and about as far from setting rigorous academic standards as one can get." Extension for submitting plan requested; addition of religion-oriented guideline requested.

OBJECTOR: Boyertown Area Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers Group and school board members.

RESOLUTION: The state granted the school district an extension but eventually the board voted, under protest, to accept the strategic plan for implementing the 53 state-mandated outcomes as well as a fifty-fourth: "All students should understand the impact of religion on United States and world history." Curriculum restructuring is underway, but objectors continue their opposition and are urging the governor to abolish outcome based education.

INCIDENT: In Boyertown, objections to *This Is My House* by Arthur Dorros, proposed for use in a third-grade social studies classroom, for containing references to homeless people. Rejection requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members, some of whom are members of Boyertown Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers Association, a group with ties to Citizens for Excellence in Education.

RESOLUTION: The teachers who had proposed *This Is My House* withdrew it from the list of 252 books proposed for adoption, after the objectors threatened to vote the entire list down for a fourth time, citing objections to the book.

The controversial passage in the book reads, "This is my house. This is where I live right now. My family is staying in our car. We will move into a house when we can." One objector stated, "My problem with the book is that I didn't think it was a fair depiction of the vast majority of the United States. With that book in the classroom, there will be parents who will take issue and be offended." But

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the president of the Boyertown teachers' union commented, "I didn't see this book as against the norm or moral values. Shouldn't the kids be exposed to diverse material?"

The book will still be available as supplementary reading in the class but cannot be used as a textbook. A founder of Boyertown Clergy Opposed to Censorship wondered, "If this is not censorship, what is it? Is there more to come? If they are going to ban a book such as this, what is next, or better yet, what isn't next?" The other 251 books on the proposed adoption list were approved.

INCIDENT: In Bucks County, objections to *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* by Ruth Bell, in use in a twelfth-grade elective Human Sexuality class, for alleged pornographic content and passages that undermine parental authority and depict sexual relations in explicit and vulgar language. Parents also objected to the use of *Playboy* and *Playgirl* magazines in the class for a unit on pornography. One objector, whose daughter forged parental permission to take the class, claimed that the book "is not a textbook, it is a how-to book." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: A review committee reached a unanimous decision to retain the book, and recommended that *Playboy* and *Playgirl* magazines be eliminated from classroom use. Under a new policy, students will not be allowed to take *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* home, to ensure that younger children will not have easy access to the book. Parents will have the opportunity to attend an evening orientation session to look at the textbook and discuss how materials are used in the classroom.

The unit on pornography will still be included in the curriculum to "sensitize students to exploitation" and teach them that "what's pornographic to you might not be to others." Students must be in twelfth-grade and receive written parental consent to take this elective class on Human Sexuality. Parental permission slips not signed in the presence of a teacher or administrator will be verified by phone. According to an official, "Things are better, there has been communication and there will continue to be communication."

INCIDENT: In Butler, objections to *The Headless Cupid*, a book by Zilpha Keatley Snyder and filmstrip produced by Pied Piper Productions and *The Mystery of Hypnosis*, a filmstrip produced by Coronet, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly talking about "the occult, seances, contacting people in the spirit world" and discussing "trances, ESP, reincarnation and regression." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted 4-2 to withdraw the filmstrips from the media collection on the grounds that when watching a filmstrip, students are a "captive audience." The committee agreed to retain the book because reading a book is a choice made by one student. The two committee members who voted in favor of retaining all the materials were librarians.

INCIDENT: In Butler, objections to *The Monster Riddle Book* by Jane Sarnoff and *Supernatural Tales of Terror and Suspense* by Alfred Hitchcock, available in an elementary school library, because she "didn't see any value in defining monsters for children—especially monsters that prey on children" and because the books are "too scary." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint regarding *The Monster Riddle Book*, a review committee voted 4-2 to withdraw the title from the library's collection. Following a formal complaint by the same parent regarding *Supernatural Tales of Terror and Suspense*, the review committee voted unanimously to retain the title but to restrict its availablity to fifth- and sixth-graders. The parent acknowledged that these were not books her son might normally have picked out. Rather, he was selecting books he thought would anger his mother and then leaving them around the house for her to find.

INCIDENT: In Carlisle, objections to *I'll Be Seeing You* by Mary Higgins Clark, for adoption for use in a tenth-grade English class, for violence and profanity.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 6-2 to adopt the book. A board member stated, "Since the English Department is recommending the book, I personally don't feel we should remove it from the adoption list."

INCIDENT: In Easton, a high school refused to let a senior wear his United States Army National Guard uniform in his yearbook portrait. Male students were required to appear in a color-coordinated shirt, tie, and jacket for their senior portraits. The student's uniform fully complied with these requirements, but the photographer refused to take his picture, stating that it was the school's directive that he not do so.

Officials of the school referred to the "school policy" that prohibits the wearing of uniforms for senior portraits, but no seniors had been informed of the policy, nor was the policy written anywhere. Such a policy would apparently violate state board of education regulations that prohibit school officials from imposing limitations on student dress "unless the attire causes a disruption of the educa-

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tional process or constitutes a health or safety hazard." Regulations also provide that, for extracurricular activities, students may be required to wear certain types of clothing only if necessary to insure their health or safety.

People For the American Way wrote a letter to the school principal stating, "There can be no question that [the student's] desire to wear the uniform of the United States Army National Guard in his senior portrait did not in any way endanger his health or safety or disrupt the educational process, nor has the school contended that it would." People For requested that the student's senior portrait be rescheduled and that he be photographed in uniform, and the superintendent agreed to comply with that request. The student will appear in uniform in the portrait section of his senior yearbook.

INCIDENT: In Eldred, objections to *Bunya the Witch* by Robert Kraus, available in an elementary school library, because "its main purpose is to get children caught up in witchcraft." Wrote the objector, "I hope you'll consider discarding this book and others that are offensive." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: In the absence of a formal reconsideration policy, a decision to retain the book was made by school personnel after a written complaint was given to the library supervisor.

INCIDENT: In Elizabethtown, objections to *My Teacher Is an Alien* by Bruce Coville, in use in fourth grade as supplementary reading for theme instruction on outer space, for inappropriate references to human development and menstruation and language usage, specifically "Oh my god." Objectors also felt the book insults teachers, is disrespectful of parents, and portrays the young main character solving a problem by herself instead of depending on others. A school board member and parent of a student in the class objected to the material claiming, "Right away, the title flagged me as a put-down to teachers. I thought it was sending a poor message." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and school board member.

RESOLUTION: A review committee recommended retaining the book and suggested teachers use discretion when reading the book aloud, altering "Oh my god" to "Oh my gosh" or "Oh my goodness." After parents filed formal complaints with the school district, children of objectors were "excused" from reading the book. Current policy allows parents to opt their children out of activities they deem offensive to their religious beliefs. The objectors have not taken further action, and *My Teacher Is an Alien* remains in use.

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INCIDENT: In Gibsonia, objections to *Lily* by Cindy Bonner, available in a middle school library, for allegedly having "no moral guidance to it" and for delivering the message of "lust above all else." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee initially decided to withdraw the book temporarily until a process could be developed that would allow parents to participate in the selection of reading materials available in the school library. The objector was unsatisfied and appealed the recommendation to the school board, asking that the book be removed permanently. The school board voted 6-1 to remove the book, but a policy is still being developed that would take the responsibility of selecting library books out of the hands of the librarian and place it in the hands of a panel of parents and administrators.

Several parents in the community were outraged by what they perceived as a "pressured" vote that "sidestepped the policy." One parent asked, "What does book-banning teach our children? It teaches them that any ideas different from their own are wrong. That's not right." The objector responded, "Censorship is an overused word."

INCIDENT: In Greensburg, objections to *Literature in Society*, a 1,500-page literature anthology published by Prentice-Hall, and *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers, in use in a twelfth-grade elective literature class, for allegedly containing offensive language and vulgar themes. The objector was particularly offended by the use of the word "nigger" in an excerpt from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, and references to menstruation and homosexuality in "Woman Poem" by Nikki Giovanni. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent, whose children do not attend the school, with assistance from United We Stand and the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: Just months after acquiring the approved anthology for the class, the nine-member school board supported the assistant superintendent's decision to remove all 150 copies of the text from the classroom on the grounds that while "99.9 percent of the book is excellent," it contained words "that have no place, we didn't think, in the public school." The assistant superintendent had removed the books following a complaint by a parent whose children do not attend the school. The books were removed in violation of school policy requiring that a review committee be formed to evaluate challenged materials. The superintendent in rejecting a grievance filed by the teachers' union charging that improper procedures were used to remove the approved texts, stated that the current policy does not apply when a school administrator lodges the complaint.

In the meantime, students and teachers were left using photocopied segments of other anthologies and novels from other classes, which, according to the teacher, "destroyed the thematic approach" of the course. When one of the two teachers

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teaching the course selected, ordered and distributed *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, which had been approved for use in a class last year, the chair of the text-selection committee told her to send the books back based on a review that stated that the book "may shock." The teachers suggested another textbook for the course and were instructed to leaf through the book page by page to flag any potentially offensive segments. One teacher called it her "biggest tragedy in 24 years of teaching."

Months later when the teachers' grievance went to arbitration, the matter was settled by an order that policy be followed in the future and that failure to do so would not only be a violation of the policy but a violation of the law. The two teachers teaching the course were each given $200 compensation for the extra time spent on teaching the course without texts. The superintendent accepted the objector's proposal that books "be available for general review prior to voting on them" for 30 days. Textbooks are currently being reviewed for class next year, but no book has been found that has not elicited at least one objection.

INCIDENT: In the Keystone School District, a group of residents presented the school board with a petition asking that the district revamp the way the subject of human origins is taught. The group objected to the inclusion of evolution and the absence of Creationism. The board then ordered the curriculum committee to review the district's science textbooks, and voted 7-1 to accept their recommendation to exclude Creationism from tenth-grade biology classes. Said the committee chair, "[The board] asked us to make sure evolution was presented as theory. We have done that."

The legal expert retained by the board to address the issue wrote, "Given what I now know of the pressure being exerted on the...[d]istrict, the motivation for the teaching of Creation science seems to be religious in nature. As such, I believe such instruction would be unconstitutional." In response to this, a resident in favor of Creationism replied, "Do you think atheist people are going to [introduce it]?...Sure, it is coming from religious people."

INCIDENT: In Landisville, objections to the graduation speech written by a valedictorian, for criticizing the invocation traditionally given at the commencement ceremony. The student first confronted school officials about the invocation when she sent letters to the principal, superintendent and school board president requesting that it be replaced with a moment of silence on the grounds that an invocation would violate the separation of church and state. Her concern arose in part because she had recently been studying the First Amendment in her advanced placement government class. The valedictorian's request was honored and the graduation ceremony began with "a moment of personal reflection," but school officials rejected her speech, which condemned an education system that "adheres to traditions for tradition's sake." She was asked to revise the speech and school officials approved the revised speech. The valedictorian decided not to attend graduation, however, and she was replaced by another student speaker who

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concluded her speech by asking those present to join her in spoken prayer. Said the valedictorian, "I did win anyway. They took out the invocation."

INCIDENT: In Montoursville, objections to *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, read aloud to a sixth-grade class and available in a middle school library, for depicting "a mindless and inhumane society." The objector asked the district to "eliminate fantasy worlds and soap-opera lifestyles and teach [our children] how to be responsible citizens." He further stated that the presence of *The Giver* in the library, along with Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* and Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*, was proof that students are being exposed not to the three R's, but to "the three S's: sex, suicide and swearing." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to move the Newbery Award-winning book from the fifth- and sixth-grade section of the library to the seventh- and eighth-grade section. In addition, teachers were directed not to read the book aloud to sixth-graders. The objector, seeking to have the book removed from the library altogether, appealed the decision first to the superintendent and then to the school board. Both upheld the committee's decision. Said the superintendent, "Public schools must provide an opportunity for children to learn, to grow, to be exposed to a wide variety of information, and to be allowed to develop their own imaginations and personalities."

INCIDENT: In Morrisville, objections to *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, in use in an elective high school English class and available in the school library, for sexual content and profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member.

RESOLUTION: Only a few weeks after approving its use, the school board voted unanimously to temporarily pull *The Bluest Eye* from the curriculum where it was to be read as part of a new Modern American Literature course open to students in grades nine through twelve. In a violation of school policy, the book was removed from the curriculum and taken away from students during class prior to its review by an appointed committee. The challenge was led by a school board member who previously challenged *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Several students were outraged by what they perceived to be censorship and spoke out at the board meeting in opposition to removing *The Bluest Eye*. One said, "I don't think any book should be banned. It's showing our generation that books are no good for us." Others described the situation as "definitely censorship" and "totally wrong." The controversy surrounding the book has only piqued the interest of students at the school. "This is America. You should be able to say what you want to say. I'm going to go out and buy (the book) now." After many months and much debate, the school board reaffirmed its initial decision to

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prohibit the use of the Nobel- and Pulitzer Prize-winning author's book and upheld the temporary ban it imposed at the beginning of the year. The book is still available in the school library.

INCIDENT: In northern Clarion County, objections to students wearing "Co-Ed Naked" T-shirts and other clothing containing profanity, in high schools, for violation of the student dress code. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Staff and students.

RESOLUTION: Students were asked to remove the shirt or cover it up. The student dress code, adopted and approved by the student council, as well as the board of education, allows school officials to ask students to change or cover any apparel disruptive to the learning environment. The code also prohibits torn jeans and requires students who play on athletic teams to wear their hair "off the collar." The parents of students in this community support the dress code, and the assistant building principal responsible for enforcing it claims it is now in effect, "with no difficulties."

INCIDENT: In Palmyra, objections to *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by Christopher and James Lincoln Collier, in use in seventh-grade English classes, for profanity, specifically the word "goddamn." One objector said, "In our house we do not allow God's name to be used in vain," while another argued, "Since God has been removed from our schools, how can we now speak about God in a derogatory way?" Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: A school board member and a parent.

RESOLUTION: The Newbery Honor book was removed from district classrooms pending review. A school board member noted that the book had not been approved by the board before being purchased for classroom use the previous year. Ultimately, the school board's curriculum committee approved a review committee's recommendation to retain the book, but to send a letter home to parents notifying them that the work may be objectionable and that they may choose to have their children complete an alternate assignment.

One parent who supported the book told the school board of the effect it had on her son: "It made a real impact on him," she said. "It's very rare that a 13-year old child comes home and tells you about the exciting book they read in school." Another parent told the board, "While I respect the decision of a parent to restrict what their child reads, I object to their making that decision for all of us."

INCIDENT: In Palmyra, objections to *Run, Shelley, Run* by Gertrude Samuels, available in a seventh-grade reading classroom, for references to lesbianism, drug abuse, and sexual assault. Removal requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: As a result of the objectors' complaints, teachers removed all the books from their reading classroom libraries. The classroom libraries were established as part of the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) program. The books are now in the school's main library. A formal review of *Run, Shelley, Run* is underway.

INCIDENT: In Pen Argyl, objections to *Angels & Other Strangers* by Katherine Paterson, *Telling Fortunes* by Alvin Schwartz, and *Being of Two Minds* by Pamela Service, available in a middle school library, for allegedly inappropriate subject matter presumed from the book titles. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member.

RESOLUTION: The school board retained the books without a formal vote. Although the objector did not read the books, he saw the book titles on a purchase order for the library and assumed the books were about angels, fortune telling, and schizophrenia. Because the objector is a school board member, proper reconsideration procedure was not followed, and the board reviewed the books prior to a review committee's recommendation. At the school board review, a fellow board member asked the objector to read a book first the next time he was concerned about a book title: "We can't every single time you look at a title you don't care for bring it to the board and set up a committee." The superintendent commented, "I view this as very serious business... because basically you're playing with the First Amendment, and you need to be very careful with what you're doing."

INCIDENT: In Pittsburgh, objections to articles in the *Keynote*, a high school student newspaper, for referring to a controversial affair between a school board member and a district administrator that had recently been exposed in local news media. The objectors claimed that an article in the student paper would create a chaotic atmosphere and that student reporters could potentially be called in as witnesses in litigation over the controversy. Removal of references to the affair requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal and superintendent.

RESOLUTION: The incident began when the objectors told student journalists to submit articles that mentioned the controversy to the superintendent for approval. Although the story had been reported extensively in the local media, passing references to the affair were cut from two opinion pieces, and a short editorial that focused on the controversy was removed altogether. As the paper was about to go to press, the superintendent reconsidered and allowed the advisor to make the final decision. The advisor did not alter the paper at that point, but told students that they could write on the controversy in future issues.

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INCIDENT: In Shenandoah, objections to *Killing Mr. Griffin* by Lois Duncan, in use in a seventh-grade English class, for violence, profanity and references to illegal drug use. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: No formal complaint was ever filed, but the book was nevertheless evaluated by a review committee because two objectors took their complaints directly to the school board. After reading and discussing the book, the committee recommended that *Killing Mr. Griffin*, part of the Shenandoah middle school curriculum for ten years, be retained as an educational resource. One board member, who is also an English teacher, commented that the book's suspense makes it more appealing to students who don't like to read.

INCIDENT: In West Chester, several objections to three books recently selected by teachers as part of a high school multicultural curriculum. *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid, proposed required reading for twelfth-grade English, was challenged for containing "erotic/sexual and offensive subject matter." *In Country* by Bobbie Ann Mason, proposed optional reading for the tenth grade, was challenged on the grounds that it (as well as the other two books) allegedly contains "illicit sex, vulgarity, violence, molestation, homosexuality." *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, which had been in use for five years in eleventh-grade English at one high school, was challenged on the grounds that it depicts incest, rape and child molestation. Removal of *The Bluest Eye* from the curriculum and rejection of *Lucy* and *In Country* requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member, parents, community members.

RESOLUTION: The board voted unanimously to approve all three novels, though they voted 6-3 to make *Lucy* optional rather than required reading.

The controversy over the books began with one member of the school board mentioning her objections to *Lucy* and *The Bluest Eye*. Subsequently, several parents filed formal complaints against the books. A group of "taxpayers" presented a petition containing 185 signatures against the books, describing them as "pornographic." However, at least 28 of the petitioners resided in other school districts; and in at least two cases lived in other states.

Referring to six books, among which are the challenged materials, and all of which have received literary awards, one objector said, "I found many of the books depressing. Literature should be uplifting." The board, in its decision to retain the books, affirmed their literary value.

INCIDENT: In Pennsylvania, recent opposition to outcome based education (OBE) includes the passage of a state House resolution to establish a special committee to investigate the state Department of Education. The resolution targets school

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programs that deal with "mental health, behavioral and emotional problems," matters related to "curriculum, learning outcomes, and other educational standards and goals" and possible infringement of parents' and students' rights. Some legislators say that the true target of the investigation is OBE. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Sam Rohrer at the urging of anti-OBE activist Anita Hoge, leader of the Pennsylvania Coalition for Academic Excellence.

The governor has also supported legislation that would make OBE, which was adopted by the state Board of Education in 1993, optional for school districts. The Secretary of Education gave permission to districts to stop the process of planning and implementing OBE until the proposed legislation is considered. That legislation is pending.

INCIDENT: In Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Ridge has led one of the most highly visible campaigns to establish a system of school vouchers that would fund both non-sectarian and religious private schools. Opponents of the bill argued that such a voucher plan would violate the constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state, as well as divert resources from a public school system already suffering from a lack of funds. While the initiative was narrowly defeated this spring, the governor and his supporters plan to reintroduce it later in the year.

STATE OVERVIEW

RHODE ISLAND

In Barrington, the school district faced a variety of challenges: to sexuality education, a holiday assembly song, and outcome based education. In Portsmouth, a principal removed student charcoal drawings of nude human models from a display in a high school hallway

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INCIDENT: In Barrington, objections to the word "Christ" in "Let the Sleigh Bells Ring," a song being sung in a third-grade holiday assembly, on the grounds that it is offensive to non-Christians and embarrassing for children because it is a religious symbol.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Instead of singing, "For Jesus Christ was born today," the student chorus sang, "For Jee-ee-sus was born today" as per the superintendent's orders. "The emphasis is that no child be embarrassed by any production at any time of year," he said. The holiday assembly included songs about both Christmas and Hanukkah.

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RHODE ISLAND

INCIDENT: In Barrington, challenges to outcome based education (OBE), for allegedly replacing academics with psychology and promoting federal control of education. Rejection of local outcome based educational reforms requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and members of a New England citizens' group called Voices That Care.

RESOLUTION: The Barrington School Committee approved their strategic plan to move towards what they call "results-driven" education, which one school administrator says emphasizes academic outcomes rather than attitudinal ones.

National, statewide, and local education reforms and legislation have been the focus of opposition in Rhode Island for more than a year. A newsletter of Voices That Care cited anti-OBE psychiatrist Jeffrey Burke Satinover claiming that "Schools...will be encouraged to concentrate on 'soft' attitude change and avoid 'hard-to-learn' facts and skills." The newsletter also alleged that Goals 2000 promotes a "statist mentality" in which "the state, desiring more control, will seize this opportunity to intrude into the home - your home" and in which "power will be removed from your elected school committee representatives and will be turned over to handpicked puppets of the educrats."

INCIDENT: In Barrington, objections to the twelfth-grade health program in use in district high schools, for not being abstinence-only. Replacement with an abstinence-only sex education curriculum, teaching of "sensitive" issues in single-sex health classes, and parental input and monitoring of sexuality education curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school committee accepted the recommendations of the curriculum committee, which were based in part on public comment and input, that the current curriculum be retained.

The objector presented a petition to the school committee signed by 460 people demanding an abstinence-only curriculum, single-sex classes for "sensitive" subjects, parental monitoring of sexuality education curricula, and an end to potentially embarrassing educational activities. Objectors complained about activities such as the in-class reading aloud of a list of true-or-false statements about human sexuality and a description of what a gynecological exam feels like. More than 250 students signed a petition in favor of the health program and presented it to the schools committee. "The proposed changes would be detrimental to the effectiveness of the program," one student read aloud from the petition. "Although abstinence is and should be the foundation of the program, due to the AIDS epidemic, we feel it would be dangerous and unrealistic not to include the teaching of alternate preventive methods in the curriculum."

RHODE ISLAND

INCIDENT: In Portsmouth, objections to a student's charcoal drawings of nude human models, on display in a high school hallway, because "[t]heir display in that area was not appropriate for that audience." Removal and relocation requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: Hours after the art teacher put up the display, the principal removed five of the six drawings from the glass case. The teacher then filed a grievance with her union, saying that she had positioned the drawings to hide anything that was too explicit for a high school setting. Many students also protested the drawings' removal, posting signs in the hallways saying "Art should not be censored" and "Censorship is a disease." The superintendent said that there will be no such interference with future exhibits and the grievance was then withdrawn. However, the drawings were not returned to the exhibit.

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STATE OVERVIEW

In Greenville, the school board voted to remove *Sexuality in Education* from the ninth-grade sex education curriculum and to implement a policy of teaching sex-segregated classes in response to some board members' assertions that the book placed insufficient emphasis on abstinence and "family values." State Representative Mike Fair testified in favor of removal, incorrectly asserting that the text violated state law. In Oconee County, *Reducing the Risk* was challenged by the wife of a school board member for references to contraception and disease prevention, and for allegedly promoting homosexuality.

INCIDENT: In Berkeley County, objections to state-approved textbooks, particularly a high school math textbook and a high school world geography textbook, under consideration for adoption, for allegedly containing no math problems in the math text, and non-traditional views of historical events in the geography text. Rejection for classroom use requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and school board members.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 7-1 to adopt the textbooks for classroom use. Following a public display of the texts proposed for adoption, a few written complaints were received about the math and geography textbooks. Objectors were concerned that the math textbook amounted to outcome based education (OBE), and contained examples of other societies' contributions to math concepts. Objectors also felt that the geography text did not have enough information on capitalism, and contained too much discussion of Stalin and communism. The school board referred the issue to a curriculum committee after an initial vote

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of 4-4 on the proposed textbook list. Following the curriculum committee's recommendation to adopt the books, the school board voted to accept that recommendation.

INCIDENT: In Blackville, seven middle school students were suspended for wearing Confederate flag shirts that said "Flying high, ain't coming down," allegedly in violation of the school dress code, which prohibits "distasteful or disruptive" symbols on clothing.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: Attorneys for the students filed a lawsuit in federal court, claiming that the students' free speech rights had been violated by the application of the dress code. Court papers alleged that at least 15 students have been punished for wearing the Confederate flag shirts to school, while black students are allowed to wear Malcolm X shirts, symbolic of African American pride, that "may be offensive to white students." According to one attorney handling the case, "This suit is not about race. This suit is about freedom. When the school board censors one group, all of us lose freedom."

The students' attorneys are attempting to negotiate a settlement of the case removing the suspensions from the students' records, and allowing students to wear shirts with only the flag, but without any sort of slogan. Finally, the attorneys are requesting that the school establish a seminar on the first day of school to promote freedom of speech. Speakers at the seminar would discuss the Bill of Rights, and tolerance and respect for people from different heritages to build mutual respect between the students.

INCIDENT: In Charleston, objections to *Athletic Shorts*, a collection of short stories by Chris Crutcher, available in a high school library, for allegedly containing profane language and treating adults with disrespect. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 4-3 to uphold the recommendations of the superintendent and a review committee to retain the book. Students in a ninth-grade class were required to read one of more than 300 library books in preparation for a computerized test. The objectors claimed their son's choice, *Athletic Shorts*, contained vulgar language, specifically "bitching" and "smart ass," and contained depictions of violence, physical and mental abuse and death. One of the objectors stated, "We have gone so far with this extreme of 'freedom to read.'" The student was offered the opportunity to choose another book, but the objectors filed a formal complaint instead. The book is currently in use and according to a school board member, "The parent has every right to say her child will not read the book. At the same time, the parent has no right to say that my child cannot read the book. It's that simple."

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INCIDENT: In Chester, objections to *Go Ask Alice*, an anonymously published diary, available in a middle school library, for objectionable language and references to homosexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector declined to file a formal complaint in accordance with the district reconsideration policy. Still, an informal committee of teachers and a librarian was formed to evaluate the book, which the objector's child had checked out for a book report. The committee voted to retain the book stating, "This book is a story of a drug addict in the '60s. Although there is rough language in this book, it is used within the context of the times and the situations portrayed in the book."

INCIDENT: In Greenville, objections to *The Devil's Storybook* by Natalie Babbitt, available in an elementary school library, for describing "devil-worshiping" and because it allegedly "would result in a person feeling bad about oneself." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Student.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to retain the book, but restricted its use to intermediate students.

INCIDENT: In Greenville, objections to *The Secret of the Indians* by Lynn Reid Banks, available in an elementary school library, for "teaching children that cursing is appropriate." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to retain the book in the library, but to restrict use to intermediate students.

INCIDENT: In Greenville, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* and *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, for containing allegedly gory and unnecessary details. The objector wrote that, "The stories and folklore can influence children with wrong ideas." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to retain the material, noting the value of presenting broadly the rich heritage of American folklore.

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INCIDENT: In Greenville, objections to *Sexuality in Education*, a textbook in use in ninth-grade sex education classes, for allegedly stressing contraception rather than teaching abstinence only, and for not emphasizing traditional family values. Removal requested; sex-segregated sex education classes requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members, State Rep. Mike Fair and a physician from Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist Christian institution.

RESOLUTION: The board voted to stop using the textbook and to revise the sex education policy to require a stricter emphasis on abstinence, defined as no sexual contact before marriage. Contraceptives are still discussed, but their risks and failure rates are emphasized. The new policy also states that "Male and female students will be taught separately during the sexuality education program in an effort to enhance learning, encourage modesty, and decrease embarrassment."

A sex education advisory panel composed of parents, students, clergy, and health professionals initially recommended that the sex education curriculum be modified and updated. During that process, a district committee heard input from State Rep. Mike Fair and a physician affiliated with Bob Jones University. Though they did not have the required permission to speak at the meeting, one trustee initiated an exception allowing them to address the committee. Representative Fair complained that "[y]ou cannot teach condoms and abstinence" and asserted that the sex education textbooks violated state law. The State Department of Education found no such violations.

However, a majority of school board members did object to the textbook, with several board members objecting to any teaching about contraceptives whatsoever. One member claimed that contraceptives give teenagers a "trick or treat" perspective on sex rather than a "life or death" one. She wanted to stress the failure rates of contraceptives rather than the success rates. One school administrator commented, "Since people died with seat belts, should we still not teach children about using them?"

INCIDENT: In Greenville, objections to *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady* by Selina Hastings, available in elementary school libraries, for the "use of God's name in vain" and objectionable language such as "hell" and "hellhog." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the library, but to restrict it to intermediate students. The committee noted that the book portrayed times in which language was used differently.

INCIDENT: In Oconee County, objections to *Reducing the Risk*, a sexuality education curriculum newly adopted for use in ninth- and tenth-grade health cours-

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es, for references to contraception and sexually transmitted disease prevention, and for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Community member who is the wife of a school board member.

RESOLUTION: The comprehensive health education advisory committee examined the curriculum and unanimously recommended that it be retained as adopted, and the school board voted 11-1 to accept that recommendation. The dissenting vote was cast by the objector's husband.

The objector complained to the school board that the material "discusses vaginal sex, oral sex and anal sex" and "gives a phone number for gays and lesbians to call for information." However, according to one school administrator who served on the advisory committee, some of the objector's accusations were inflammatory and misinformed. He commented that *Reducing the Risk* strongly emphasizes abstinence and teaches students ways to say no to sex, as well as other skills they need.

INCIDENT: In Simpsonville, objections to *Shadow* by Blaise Cendrars, available in an elementary school library, for imagery that is "too intense and scary for young children." The objector claimed that "black magic" was the point of the book and that it would induce bad dreams. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to retain the book, noting that the illustrator, Marcia Brown, had won the Caldecott award for her work on the book. The committee wrote that the book did not attempt to be scary, and that it dispelled fear of shadow and showed how different shadows can be created by different light sources.

INCIDENT: In South Carolina, a Parental Rights Amendment was introduced in the state Senate which sought to ensure that the "rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." While the bill was not voted on in this legislative session, it has been assigned to a Senate subcommittee, ensuring that it will be considered in the upcoming session.

Opponents question the necessity of such an amendment, noting that the Supreme Court has already ruled that parental rights are protected under the Fourteenth Amendment. Many believe that the proposed legislation would aid would-be censors by giving parents the power to veto all library selections and classroom materials, giving one parent the power to control curriculum regardless of other parents' wishes. Some opponents also raise concerns that the amendment could put children at risk by weakening existing child labor laws and making it harder to investigate and prosecute child abuse.

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STATE OVERVIEW

A review committee in Mitchell voted to retain *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* and *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* in an elementary school library, but to restrict access to only fourth- and fifth-grade students with written permission from a parent or guardian.

INCIDENT: In Mitchell, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* and *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, because reading them "may lead to violent behavior." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, a review committee voted to retain the popular children's books but to restrict their availability to fourth- and fifth-graders. The committee's recommendation was then forwarded to the superintendent, who upheld the committee's decision but modified it, to require written permission from a parent or guardian.

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STATE OVERVIEW

In Cookeville, the superintendent removed John Steinbeck's classic, *Of Mice and Men,* in violation of school board policy. In Memphis, Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* faced a challenge by a teacher and The Christian Educators Association for allegedly containing sexually explicit scenes.

INCIDENT: In Cookeville, objections to *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, in use in a ninth-grade honors English class, for profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: In response to the complaint, the superintendent ordered the book removed from the classroom. He admitted that he had never read the book, but said, "Due to the language in it, we just can't have this kind of book being taught." The removal violated school board policy governing challenges to instructional materials.

The superintendent's action provoked an angry response from parents, educators and citizens supporting the book. Said one parent, "I am very upset that one parent can decide what my child can study and that the proper procedure was not followed in this matter." As a result of the controversy, the book was reinstated and a committee was established to review the complaint. The committee voted to

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retain *Of Mice and Men* in the classroom. "Even my mother got onto me about the removal of the book," said the school board chairman in the midst of the controversy. "She told me we needed to get that book back into the classroom." *Of Mice and Men* remains in use.

INCIDENT: In Hendersonville, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, in use in tenth-grade English, for alleged inappropriate material. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book. Although an alternative reading assignment was offered to the student of the objectors, the objectors felt the book was inappropriate for all students and filed a formal complaint. Nearly 400 students signed a petition opposing the removal of the book. The student who wrote the petition stated, "I do try to make my voice heard whenever there is anything that I feel is happening that should not be." She added, "The overall feeling of the students is [that] these parents are acting in an irrational manner."

INCIDENT: In Memphis, objections to *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, in use in a tenth-grade English class, for allegedly containing "sexually explicit" scenes that were too "realistic." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher and the Christian Educators Association.

RESOLUTION: The teacher using the texts was asked to defend the books to the administration, and the books were retained. The county supervisor of English and foreign language had removed *The Bell Jar* from the county curriculum list at the end of the 1993-94 school year. Over the summer a review committee voted 3-2 to reinstate *The Bell Jar* to the list. Both books are currently in use.

INCIDENT: In Tennessee, objections to *The Devil in the Drain* by Daniel Pinkwater, available in a third- through sixth-grade library, for content that was allegedly frightening to children. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee decided to remove the book in order to avoid media attention because of a previous controversy in a public library. In a violation of district policy, the committee pulled the book rather than send their decision on to the superintendent.

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STATE OVERVIEW

In Texas, an intense campaign against accurate health textbooks continued to play out this year, as local school districts in Beaumont, Canyon, Clear Creek, College Station, Lumberton, and Pampa faced pressure regarding their adoption choices. In Dallas, a valedictorian was eventually allowed to give her graduation speech over a principal's objections to religious references. An organized effort by school board members and The Foundation for Thought and Ethics to have the pro-Creationist "science" textbook, *Of Pandas and People*, adopted prompted many residents in Plano to organize, and resulted in the defeat of two Religious Right school board candidates. Challenges to Maya Angelou's classic, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, were the center of controversies in Round Rock, Southlake, and Wimberley.

INCIDENT: In Abilene, objections to *Frog, Duck, and Rabbit* by Susanna Gretz, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly encouraging name-calling and promoting insensitivity to physical disabilities. The objectors specifically disliked the fact that the other animals called the duck "flatfoot" and felt that this did not contribute to a positive "self-attitude." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A campus-level review committee voted to retain the book. The teachers on the committee felt that the book was useful and effective in the classroom as a lesson on cooperation. Since the animals in the story cannot finish their project until they stop insulting one another, the committee felt the story demonstrated that no goals can be accomplished without cooperation.

INCIDENT: In Beaumont, objections to all four state-approved health textbooks, under consideration for adoption as high school texts, for teaching children "the lowest common denominator rather than the highest moral standards." Rejection of books and adoption of "abstinence-directive" health policy requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and residents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 5-2 to reject the books in response to the objections. Instead, the board instructed the assistant superintendent to create an "abstinence-directive" curriculum using information from a variety of sources, but still covering the state mandated essential elements. As this report went to press, the district had not adopted any new materials.

INCIDENT: In Boerne, objections to proposed middle-school sexuality education curriculum *Sex Can Wait*, for not being sufficiently abstinence-based, for not pro-

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moting family values, for discussing masturbation, and for being too graphic. Adoption of *Sex Respect*, an abstinence-only curriculum, requested.

OBJECTOR: Local citizens group, school board members.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 4-2 to reject *Sex Can Wait* in favor of *Sex Respect* but agreed to allow supplementary materials to correct some of the more egregious aspects of *Sex Respect*, such as biological misinformation, sexism, and middle-class nuclear-family bias.

Sex Can Wait was recommended by the district-wide Personal Growth and Development Committee, a group of teachers, administrators, counselors, health practitioners, parents, and clergy, which had been meeting since 1986. Members of that committee voted 22-3 to adopt *Sex Can Wait*. One of the dissenting members, however, inspired a flurry of protest against the curriculum by quoting parts of it out of context and alarming parents in the community, according to another member of the committee.

The dissenting member led the citizens group in its advocacy of *Sex Respect* over *Sex Can Wait*. The objectors wrote letters to the editor of the local paper, threatened to vote out school board members, and packed school-board meetings. Despite the school board's vote in favor of *Sex Respect*, the objectors continue to fight against the use of supplementary material.

The Personal Growth and Development Committee was attacked and dissolved by the school board subsequent to the board's vote to reject the committee's recommendation.

Ironically, *Sex Can Wait* is considered to be an abstinence-only curriculum, though it is less "fear-based" and more medically accurate than *Sex Respect*. One member of the Personal Growth and Development Committee, a retired professor who identifies himself as a "conservative Christian," favored *Sex Can Wait* over *Sex Respect* because the former's approach is "come, let us reason together" rather than "this is what you should believe" and "this is what we are going to teach you." He noted that "just to give teenagers a set of rules without explaining why those rules are a good idea is not a good idea for the teenagers."

INCIDENT: In Canyon, objections to all four of the state-approved health textbooks, under consideration for adoption as high school texts, for allegedly using "values clarification and situational ethics" and for containing "subtle innuendos that the students should question their parents' values." One objector alleged that one of the texts, *Perspectives on Health*, "has a pro-homosexual and anti-family agenda. That is why it is endorsed by many lesbian and gay rights groups." Rejection of textbooks and adoption of *Teen Aid* requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents calling themselves the Community Impact Council.

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RESOLUTION: The board voted to accept the textbook adoption committee's recommendation to adopt one of the books, *Health: A Guide to Wellness.* However, the district is delaying purchasing the books for one year while it works with members of the community to develop a curriculum with other materials. The Community Impact Council had been monitoring the health texts during the state adoption process, looking for the inclusion of material they find offensive.

INCIDENT: In the Clear Creek school district, objections to all state-approved health and psychology textbooks recommended by the textbook adoption committee, for containing "offensive and intrusive" material. The objectors alleged that the health texts discussed "homosexuality, euthanasia, suicide analysis, drug legalization, and abortion...without consideration for the religious and moral values held sacred by many parents in our community." Objectors also alleged that the psychology texts contained "countless violations of student/parent/family privacy rights, disregard for promotion of healthy behavior, advocacy for rebellion against school policies, meditation exercises, activities for students to justify divorcing their families." Rejection of texts requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to adopt *Health: A Guide to Wellness*, but not the ancillary materials, for use in health classes. The board had previously voted to reject *Skills for Wellness*, the text originally recommended by the adoption committee. The board voted twice to reject the psychology textbook recommended by the adoption committee, *Psychology and You*, and has not yet adopted a psychology text.

Wrote one school board member of his opposition to the books, "I cannot in good conscience, knowingly approve textbooks that violate my religious beliefs." One educator attributed the board's rejection to the influence of the state board of education member for the district, who had written to local boards of her opposition to the four approved health texts.

INCIDENT: In College Station, objections to four state-approved health education textbooks: *Health: A Guide to Wellness; Skills for Wellness; Perspectives on Health;* and *Making Life Choices*, all proposed for adoption into the high school health education curriculum, on the grounds that they allegedly do not stress abstinence. Rejection of all books requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members and the Eagle Forum.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 4-3 to adopt three of the four textbooks, reversing its prior decision to reject the same three textbooks.

A few months earlier in the school year, after extensive public review and debate, the textbook committee had recommended all of the state-approved texts except

Health: A Guide to Wellness. The school board rejected that recommendation by a 4-3 vote. Objectors had expressed their concerns to the board about the books' coverage of such topics as homosexuality, abortion, condom use, euthanasia and masturbation. The Eagle Forum had distributed a flier publicizing the textbook adoption process and the board vote. The flier said that all four textbooks contain "objectionable material" and "situational ethics." Of the four, the Eagle Forum claimed, *Health: A Guide to Wellness* was the least objectionable: "Strong abstinence messages are given, but they fall short of upholding a standard of abstinence from sexual activity until married."

The chairwoman of the textbook committee commented, "I think all four books were excellent." *Making Life Choices*, which will be used next year, has "a wonderful plan encouraging the kids to practice abstinence," she said.

The same four textbooks were the source of controversy across Texas after being approved by the state board of education.

INCIDENT: In Conroe, objections to *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* by Ernest Gaines, in use in a seventh-grade language arts class, for containing racial slurs. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members.

RESOLUTION: After two African American pupils complained that white students snickered while passages containing racial slurs were read aloud in class, the principal decided to suspend reading of the book until it could be evaluated for its appropriateness. The book, which was being used as part of a lesson in racial tolerance, is a fictitious account of a freed slave's 100-year struggle for civil rights. A review committee agreed that the book was a useful educational tool and acknowledged the need for "sensitivity and responsiveness to issues of cultural and ethnic differences." The book was reinstated and students were given the option of reading it alone in the library or reading another book from the approved list.

INCIDENT: In Dallas, objections to a speech written by a high school valedictorian, for containing references to God, Christ and the Bible. According to the student, after she submitted the speech, as required, for a check of grammar, she was told by the principal that the speech was "too heavy-duty religious" and could not be given as written. After meeting with the principal, the student and her family consulted an attorney who threatened to sue the school district for violating the student's "constitutionally guaranteed rights of free speech and free expression." The school conceded and the speech was delivered as it was originally written. The principal insists she merely suggested that the student rewrite the speech so that non-Christians wouldn't be offended, saying, "obviously, there was a misunderstanding. We just wanted to make sure that if someone was offended, they wouldn't place blame in our [the district's] lap."

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INCIDENT: In Fort Stockton, objections to *Bless Me, Ultima*, by Rudolfo Anaya, available as a supplemental reading resource in a ninth-grade English class, for allegedly containing information about witchcraft and discussing Spanish culture and religion. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: In the absence of a reconsideration policy, the superintendent asked the teacher to remove the book from the classroom upon the complaint of one parent. Rather than discuss her concerns with the teacher or the principal, the objector approached members of the school board to complain about the content of the book. The school board voted 4-3 to retain the book in the curriculum but to restrict its use to eleventh- and twelfth-grade literature classes. The book is currently on a supplemental reading list.

INCIDENT: In Houston, objections to *The Boy Who Lost His Face* by Louis Sachar, available in a kindergarten through fifth-grade library, for allegedly offensive content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to remove the book from the library.

INCIDENT: In Lumberton, objections to all four state-approved health texts, under consideration for adoption as high school textbooks, for "offensive" coverage of abortion, birth control and homosexuality, and for containing lessons that allegedly bypass parental authority. Said one objector at a school board meeting, "We don't need that trash in this school district. Homosexuals living together: it's dirt and it's trash and these books address this. People say, 'maybe it's not so bad that they are homosexuals.' Well it is bad. Once you let that trash in, it is in." Rejection of textbooks requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board unanimously voted to adopt all textbooks except health books. The board also discussed the possibility of reviewing the fear-based health curriculum published by Teen Aid, for adoption. No health text had been adopted as this report went to press.

INCIDENT: In Midland, objections to *The High King* by Lloyd Alexander, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly containing allusions to magic and witches. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the children's book was evaluated by a review committee, which voted to retain the title in the library's collection. This recommendation was then forwarded to the district committee, which voted to uphold the decision.

INCIDENT: In Pampa, objections to *Health: A Guide to Wellness*, a state-approved health text recommended for adoption by the district textbook selection committee, for allegedly providing unclear instruction on "right and wrong," teaching other than "normal family values," and having an environmental agenda that shows a bias against capitalism. One objector said that the book was too explicit about condoms, spermicides, and the sexual acts that transmit HIV. Rejection of textbook requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members and residents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 4-3 to reject the textbook, overturning the recommendation of the district selection committee. The district already has a policy emphasizing abstinence and teaches the sexuality education part of the health curriculum using the fear-based *Sex Respect* and *Facing Reality* materials.

INCIDENT: In Pflugerville, objections to books by R.L. Stine, available in the middle school library, for alleged violent content, profanity, and sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Although some of R.L. Stine's books are still available in the library, many have been removed. The principal instructed the librarian to remove all R.L. Stine books from the library and read them to determine each book's "acceptability." According to a teacher, the R.L. Stine books returned to the library shelves are "void of any controversy."

INCIDENT: In Plano, three school board members who had recently attended an "Education Summit" sponsored by the Christian Coalition, Eagle Forum, and Concerned Women for America, attempted to introduce the pro-Creationist "science" textbook, *Of Pandas and People* by Dean Kenyon, for use in science classes as a supplemental text. According to the book's publisher, The Foundation for Thought and Ethics, these "conservative Christian" board members, "drafted a resolution to have the Plano district buy copies for all biology students." However, at the Foundation's suggestion, the board members "modified the wording to provide copies only to biology teachers who requested them for review."

After many community members showed up at a school board meeting to speak against introducing Creationism, one of the board members withdrew the pro-

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posal. Said another board member who had recommended the book: "[W]hen you take religion out of it, it is hard to teach how you got intelligent design." But he said one place to find the answers "is in Scripture."

In other actions, the board passed a "traditional moral values" resolution, removed condom demonstrations from the AIDS awareness curriculum, and refused to endorse "Take Our Daughters to Work Day." Concerned with the working majority of Religious Right members on the board, some community members formed a group called Keep Quality in Plano Schools to mobilize mainstream voters. In recent elections, two Religious Right candidates, including one incumbent, were defeated by candidates who said they would not have voted for *Of Pandas and People* because it could infringe on students' religious rights.

INCIDENT: In Richardson, objections to *The Egypt Game* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder, in supplemental use in district elementary schools, for references to "the occult." The book "has very little to do with Egypt or its people—but very much to do with the occult," said an objector. "Besides a thorough indoctrination into occult practices, the book also suggests to children that it is all right to lie to and keep secrets from parents, trespass upon private property, light fires, and trust strangers." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 5-1 to retain the book as supplemental reading, upholding previous decisions by the superintendent, a district review committee, and a school review committee. The board ruled that teachers will notify parents before *The Egypt Game* is to be used and provide alternative assignments to the children of parents who object to the book. Said one parent in response to the challenge, "We may never know what causes deviant behavior in our society, but I would bet that it isn't caused by reading a simple children's novel."

INCIDENT: In Round Rock, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, in use in a ninth-grade honors English class, for containing profanity and allegedly encouraging premarital sex and homosexuality. Said one objector, "As parents and citizens we need to remove the offensive books from our schools, not in the name of censorship, but in the name of decency. And we should consider removing those elected officials and school administrators who support this type of 'literature.' In short, it is time to take back our schools." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents with assistance from Citizens for Excellence in Education and Eagle Forum.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted to uphold the decisions of the superintendent and two review committees to retain the book. Though students always had

the option of reading an alternative book, in the future, the district will have parents and students sign forms indicating the book of their choice after receiving a reading list of books including "brief annotations."

A small group of parents had filed complaints days after a school board member said on a local radio show that she did not approve of the book's content. The objectors had also told local newspapers that they would file complaints about two other books in use in ninth-grade English classes, *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya and *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday, but never followed up on the threat.

The fact that the three authors are all members of minority groups prompted one area resident to note: "The issue is how these very sensitive subjects of race and gender are being presented in the classroom, and people are afraid." Those who wanted the books removed, however, simply viewed the material as pornographic. After reading excerpts of the books, the Texas director of Citizens for Excellence in Education said that the authors' ethnicity "doesn't give them the right to titillate our kids whether they are red, black, brown, yellow or white."

The controversy expanded when a local newspaper printed an editorial arguing for the establishment of "conservative" and "liberal" campuses. The editorial advocated a voucher system because, "[l]ike water and oil, some things are simply never going to blend satisfactorily. When that happens, separate containers are the solution. That principle can apply to schools also." The junior class president at an area high school disagreed, saying, "Children should interact and see all cultures and segments of society."

INCIDENT: In Southlake, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, available in a middle school library, because it "contains graphic profanities," is "a how-to book on how to live an immoral life," and "encourages premarital sex and lesbianism." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The board voted unanimously to uphold a review committee's decision to retain the book. Parents supporting the review committee's decision attended the board meeting wearing green ribbons. Said one parent, arguing that only she has the right to decide what her child reads, "The whole issue is about not having these values imposed on us."

INCIDENT: In Southlake, objections to *The Last Mission* by Henry Mazer and *Iceman* by Chris Lynch, on the shelves of a seventh- and eighth-grade library, for containing profanity. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: After recent elections resulted in one new school board member, the board voted 6-1 to return *The Last Mission* to the shelf, reversing a 4-3 vote by the old board to remove the book earlier in the year. Before the decision went to the board, a review committee had voted to retain the book, citing its critical acclaim and historical accuracy. A review committee had also voted to remove *Iceman*, saying that it was not highly recommended for its literary value.

Said one of *The Last Mission's* objectors, "We want to get this book out of the schools, and other books that have similar language." The author of *The Last Mission* had written a letter in protest of the board's decision, stating: "To make a handful of words...a reason to withhold the book from our children seems petty and insulting to the memory of our veterans and the needs of our children to know. When we deny them the freedom to read...we are denying them freedoms we fought - and many of us died - for."

The board's previous decision to pull *The Last Mission* had caused much controversy and was a factor in the defeat of one board member who had voted for the ban. Wearing green ribbons to oppose the ban, nearly 100 parents presented a petition with 300 signatures to the board. The controversy also caused the board to revise the reconsideration policy, adding parents to the review committee and creating another level of review for challenged books. Said one board member who had changed his position regarding *The Last Mission*, "It was a mistake to take the book off the shelf....I can tell you, as a body I think we learned from that."

INCIDENT: In Wharton, objections to the sex education curriculum at a junior high school, for promoting safe sex and birth control. Removal of materials and replacement with an "abstinence-only" curriculum requested.

OBJECTOR: Citizen group affiliated with Concerned Women for America and a local church and using information from Focus on the Family.

RESOLUTION: The school district convened a committee made up of teachers, health professionals, and ministers, including two of the objectors, to write a new sex education policy, and that group decided to adopt *Teen Aid* and *Choosing the Best*, both fear-based, abstinence-only curricula.

Earlier, the objectors, most of whom are either not parents of children in that district or not parents at all, began meeting in September of 1993 to review the sex education material which was in place in the schools. In May of 1994 they submitted an unsolicited proposal to the school board for an abstinence-only policy, citing distorted and inaccurate "studies" of sexuality education by Focus on the Family. They also requested the power to approve all instructional materials and to remove all library and classroom materials that are not abstinence-only.

The superintendent, who is the only one empowered to make recommendations to the school board, declined to recommend the group's proposed policy. The

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objectors called board members and administrators and attended board meetings until a committee was convened by the school district in the fall of 1994 to rewrite the sex education policy. The committee formulated a new policy for sex education, which was passed unanimously by the school board in the spring of 1995. The policy states that sex education "shall present abstinence as the only safe and healthy lifestyle for youth" with abstinence defined as "refraining from all sexual activity."

According to one school official, the newly adopted curriculum is not very different from the old curriculum, except that it is more "value-based," emphasizes the failure rate of condoms and warns against premarital sex. She was unaware that *Teen Aid* and *Choosing the Best* are widely criticized, fear-based, abstinence-only programs. They will be implemented in the fall of 1995.

INCIDENT: In Wimberley, objections to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, on the required-reading list in a ninth-grade honors English class, for sexually explicit content and references to rape and masturbation. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and community members.

RESOLUTION: A citizens' review committee voted 17-5 to retain the book, but after an appeal by one of the objectors, the superintendent recommended and the school board voted unanimously to remove the book from the ninth-grade curriculum. The board approved the use of the book in the eleventh and twelfth grades only.

The book was the focus of controversy in the community for several months. Formal complaints against the book prompted 75 people to debate the issue at the high school library, after which the 22-member citizens' committee reviewed the book. The superintendent surveyed parents of ninth-grade honors students and based his recommendation that the book be available only in upper-level curricula partly on the fact that 22 parents favored doing so, while 18 wanted to retain the book at the ninth-grade level.

INCIDENT: In Texas, objections to *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *Changes of Latitude* by Will Hobbs, available in a middle school library, for allegedly containing "sexual overtones" and violence. The objectors accused the district of using "books that are graphic in sexual situation descriptions and innuendo...that describe boys 'cruising for foxes,' aphrodisiacs, meeting women in motel rooms, sexual conquests, and young people hoping to get lucky." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Rather than file a formal complaint, the objectors circumvented district policy by immediately addressing the school board with their concerns.

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Sections of both books were read aloud as examples of "offensive" materials, but concern about the content of the two books quickly developed into an attack on the entire school curriculum and an attempt by objectors to put forth their own agenda. The objectors demanded that "parents should have a complete list of all books that will be made available or brought from outside reading sources, into the class, so they have the opportunity early on in the school year to at least object" and argued against a book that addresses "Native American Indian cultures with dance ceremonies that make the spirits of humans and animals as one. Why are our schools teaching about Indian religions when they can't teach about our Christian religion?"

While the objectors insisted "We don't want to censor anything. We only want to make good choices," they criticized the selection process, saying: "The teachers and librarians here must begin to consider the conservative tone of this community." But the objectors were not speaking for everyone in the community: several parents who attended the board meeting strongly opposed the group's attempt to "deliberately destroy the credibility of an outstanding reading program and demoralize the staff that has made such a vital program one many schools would like to emulate." One parent wrote a letter to the local paper, saying, "I become very concerned when one parent feels they should be able to dictate what my child can read or has available to read...Those of us who believe in the free flow of ideas and information need to remain vigilant." Both books remain in the district media collection.

INCIDENT: In Texas, objections to *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in a middle school library, for being too scary and allegedly making "little Charles Mansons" out of kids. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint and two appeals, the superintendent upheld a review committee's decision to retain the popular children's book in the library collection.

The principal and librarian had initially agreed to insert a parental permission card in the book, but the objector refused to accept this arrangement and asked that the book be removed with only a picture of the cover left on the shelf, so that no child would accidentally open the book and be scared.

INCIDENT: In Texas, objections to *The Way of Witches* by Perle Epstein, available in a junior high school library, for allegedly containing "explicit directions and materials needed for casting spells and performing animal sacrifices." According to the objector, her daughter and her daughter's friends were using this book "for some kind of Friday-the-13th scheme." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: Although there was no formal complaint, the superintendent found the book "objectionable" and removed it from the library. The librarian was told by the principal to remove books related to witchcraft from the shelves of the library. She complied, and the eight books on this subject matter were delivered by the principal to the superintendent's office. According to the librarian, she later asked for the books back and they are currently available on library shelves.

INCIDENT: In Texas, the battle over health textbooks, begun last year during approval by the State Board of Education, continued as local school districts made decisions about which of the four state-approved texts to adopt and purchase. Many of the same activists who fought statewide adoption of the texts continued to voice objections. Unsatisfied with the omissions to which publishers agreed during the state adoption and review process, objectors affiliated with Religious Right political groups contacted local school boards in an attempt to influence their adoption decision.

In a letter beginning "Dear Pro-Family Friend:", the American Family Association of Texas listed pages of "objectionable" excerpts from the books and urged recipients to go to their school boards and textbook review committees. They endorsed one text, *Health: A Guide to Wellness*, saying it "is less sexually explicit than the other books, generally promotes abstinence rather than condoms, and does not undermine the authority of parents or the family."

The publisher of *Health: A Guide to Wellness* sent a letter to local superintendents citing the endorsements of the Texas Council for Family Values, the American Family Association of Texas, and Concerned Women for America, and urging districts to adopt the book because it "is the only health text that is exclusively abstinence based,"does not discuss "protected sex by wearing a condom," and "does not promote a Pro-Homosexual lifestyle or an Anti-Family agenda."

Around the same time, a newly elected state school board member wrote to all school board presidents in her district informing them that she "would not have voted to approve these books," and that they could adopt one of the four texts, "and unofficially give clear instructions to shelve the books." Said one editorial, "Textbooks and school lessons ought not to have to pass some sort of religious litmus test to be approved unless, of course, it is a private religious school. Perhaps [the board member] has forgotten that she is on the state's public school board."

INCIDENT: In Texas, a state senator proposed an amendment to an education bill that would prohibit the State Board of Education from adopting books that contain racial slurs. When asked if this would ban history texts that contain references to racial slurs or *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, the senator said that it would. The amendment was defeated on the Senate floor.

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INCIDENT: In Texas, the Senate passed a bill to establish a pilot program providing government vouchers to parents for the costs of private education, including tuition for private religious schools. However, in the House, the Public Education Committee eliminated a similar proposal from the omnibus education bill. Voucher legislation was supported by groups that advocated religious instruction in schools. One supporter of vouchers claimed that the key issue was "parental rights": "The parent can then choose... whether they want sex education or not, whether they want prayer in school or not." However, a coalition of organizations, including the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, opposed the bill saying, "Only public schools guarantee choice for all children. All private schools, but not all children, are given choices by a private school voucher program." The House Public Education Committee chairperson said he opposed the bill because it would send the message "to the public and the children of this state...that we as a state are unwilling to commit the resources and manpower necessary to clean up and remove the violence from schools...we are going to let them take their money and run — and that bothers me a lot."

INCIDENT: In Texas, 166 of 254 counties in Texas have reportedly passed nonbinding resolutions encouraging the reintroduction of some form of prayer into public schools. Denton County Commissioner Scott Armey, the leader of the initiative campaign and the son of Rep. Dick Armey (R-Texas), also claims to have enlisted 196 counties from 27 other states to pass similar resolutions. The resolution reads in part, "[O]ur nation was founded on the freedom OF RELIGION and was not founded on the freedom FROM RELIGION." It also claims that "court decisions and certain interest groups have contributed to the deterioration of those religious beliefs" and "reinstitution of prayer in the public schools will move this nation toward those religious ideals and beliefs upon which this nation was founded."

UTAH

STATE OVERVIEW

At a statewide debate tournament, students were kept from debating whether or not Utah should host the Winter Olympics because of concerns that word of the debate might reach the international site selection committee. In Magna, a religious film said to promote "aggressive, fundamentalist Christian doctrine" was shown to sixth-graders.

INCIDENT: In Magna, the religious film *Where Jesus Walked*, produced by United Christian Production, and part of a teacher's personal collection was shown to four sixth-grade social studies classes. After being notified by the parents of a student in the class, the Society of Separationists contacted school officials to point out the violation of the separation of church and state. The Society's Utah director called the film "aggressive, fundamentalist Christian indoctrination," and noted that the film's cover calls it "a witness to the Divinity of Jesus Christ." The

principal sent a letter to parents apologizing for the film's use, stating, "I do not believe there was any intent to indoctrinate the students in a particular belief. I think the teachers made an innocent mistake in choosing this film." In a later class, according to students, the teacher who showed the film launched into a "40-minute tirade" about the complaint in which she vilified the student who told on her. A school spokesperson claimed that the teacher only discussed the film in that class because students brought it up.

INCIDENT: In Sandy, objections to *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck, in use in a seventh-grade English class, for "the insidious visualizations" found within its chapters. The objector stated that the classic, which has been part of the curriculum since 1978, "has no place in middle school" and "should be permanently rejected." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Before contacting school officials or filing a formal complaint, the objector contacted the governor's office saying, "I want to start at the top and work my way down." The school was notified and the review committee, consisting of teachers and parents, voted overwhelmingly to retain the book. The parent appealed to the district committee, which voted to retain the book in the middle school curriculum but shift its use from grade seven to grade eight. Disturbed by what was perceived as a conspiracy by a "stacked deck," the lone objector distributed a handout to parents saying, "I find it very objectionable to be subject to a process where an important decision like this rests in the hands of so few people where the vast majority of parents are left out in the dark not even knowing what is going on." Several parents sent letters to the school, applauding its decision, saying that while they respected the objector's right to be involved in what his children read they resented his "...attempts to control what our children read. He is neither qualified nor competent to make such judgements and we protest most vigorously his attempts to do so."

INCIDENT: In Utah, objections to use of the topic of Utah hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics, in a statewide debate for advanced fourth- through ninth-graders, because of its alleged controversial political nature and potential to make the Olympic Bid Committee "uncomfortable." Removal of topic requested.

OBJECTOR: Olympic Bid Committee member.

RESOLUTION: The Statewide Elementary Intermediate Debate Committee voted to delay student debates on Utah hosting the Winter Olympics until after the International Olympic Committee had voted to determine the host city. One member of the committee expressed fears that students would be "caught up in this controversy." Media coverage of the debate topic led to heightened public

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interest and involvement, and an Olympic Bid Committee member advised the debate committee that it would be better not to use the topic due to possible misunderstanding in international circles.

After the vote to change the topic, the spokesman for the Olympic Bid Committee commented, "We want to put on our best face for the Olympic campaign. That is what this committee has been charged with." Opponents of the Olympic bid demanded to speak at the debate committee meeting, and, unhappy when the topic was changed, one opponent informed the committee they were "caving in to the Olympic Bid Committee." According to one debate committee member, "This is an excellent debate topic. Just because the bid committee does not want us to debate it because it is 'uncomfortable' for them. Uncomfortable for them? Tough."

VERMONT

STATE OVERVIEW

A small group of objectors in Barre challenged the use of the film *Schindler's List* as part of an eighth-grade unit on the Holocaust. In Addison County, an objector requested the removal of *Matilda* by Roald Dahl from an elementary school library.

INCIDENT: In Addison County, objections to *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, read aloud in a third-grade class and available in the elementary school library, for allegedly being disrespectful toward authority and encouraging kids to be disobedient. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Wife of school board chair.

RESOLUTION: The objector initially filed a formal complaint requesting that the book be removed from the school library and that classroom reading of it be discontinued. According to the principal, the objector later withdrew her request on the condition that he speak to teachers about her concerns and encourage them to use "discretion" when selecting books for classroom use. While the book remains available on the library shelf, no teacher has read it aloud since the objector's complaint.

INCIDENT: In Barre, objections to *Schindler's List*, a film to be shown in an eighth-grade unit on the Holocaust, for partial nudity, violence, sexually explicit scenes, and content that was allegedly too emotional and powerful for eighth-graders. One objector questioned the educational value of the film saying, "You don't have to see a rape to know that it's wrong." Cancellation of activity requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: The school board voted unanimously to allow the showing of the Oscar-winning film. The superintendent and other supporters noted the educational value of the film in the thematic unit and the fact that parental permission and alternative activities were used. Said one school board member, "The students have been prepared for this over the course of the past several weeks. This movie couldn't be seen under any better circumstances." Saying that a "minority shouldn't be allowed to impose its views on others," the board member also noted that those who oppose showing the film to students who had permission are engaging in a form of censorship.

VIRGINIA

STATE OVERVIEW

In Fairfax County, objections to *Family Life Education* by parents and school board members for allegedly promoting homosexuality ignited a lengthy and often bitter controversy involving the entire community. Against the recommendation of a school review committee, a Pulaski superintendent removed *The Scholastic Fun/Fact Book of Ghosts* from the school library following a parent's objection to its "anti-Christian" content.

INCIDENT: In Alexandria, objections to posters advertising a discussion group for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students at a high school.

OBJECTOR: Students.

RESOLUTION: After the posters were repeatedly torn off the walls by objectors, members of the discussion group organized an exhibit on gay and lesbian history and literature, which was on display outside the school library for two weeks. Though one member of the group heard an objector threaten to throw a book through the glass of the display case, the threat was not carried out.

INCIDENT: In Arlington, objections to *Summer Rules* by Robert Lipsyte, available in a middle school library, for allegedly inappropriate language, depictions of students drinking, and discussion of masturbation. Removal and destruction requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector complained about the book after her child checked it out. Declining to file a formal complaint, the objector instead claimed that the book was lost and paid for it. The book will be unavailable until next year when another copy can be purchased.

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INCIDENT: In Fairfax County, objections to the *Elements of Literature* anthology, in use in eighth-grade English classes, for selections that "promote violence, suggest suicide as an option, and emphasize death, war, and hatred." The objectors claimed that the book not only contained descriptions of violence, but actively taught violence. Said one objector to the school board, "We must...avoid all controversial and objectionable material in a required curriculum." Challenged stories included Edgar Allen Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and John Steinbeck's "The Pearl." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents, using material from Mel and Norma Gabler's Educational Research Analysts.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 10-1 to retain the book, upholding previous decisions by the assistant superintendent and a review committee. In responding to the initial complaints, the review committee unanimously recommended retention and addressed specific concerns about individual stories. Said one parent on the review committee, "As the parent of an eighth-grader, I am delighted that he is using this book. I only wish there were enough available for him to bring one home every night."

INCIDENT: In Fairfax County, objections to *Family Life Education*, an approved program that includes sexuality education, in use in the district's high schools, for covering homosexuality, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and contraceptives. The objectors alleged that the program promoted homosexuality and encouraged sexual activity. Information was circulated at local churches claiming that the program "disregards the moral values of our Catholic faith. The primary problems are that the program is not abstinence-based, that it treats homosexuality as morally equivalent to heterosexuality, and that it conceals vital information on the consequences of immoral sexual behavior." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and school board members.

RESOLUTION: After months of debate, an advisory committee voted 23-8 to continue to present the *Family Life Education* program with only minor changes to the teacher training material. Members of the conservative-controlled school board had previously mandated that the entire *Family Life Education* program be evaluated, and then pushed for the removal of segments of the program that address homosexuality, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and contraception. Despite the fact that these topics had already been approved for use in the high schools, a few board members sought to remove them from the curriculum. A vicious personal attack was lodged against the program's administrator, calling for his resignation and alleging that he had catered to a "very powerful homosexual lobby" and designed a sexuality education curriculum "laced with homosexual philosophies and ideals." But many students, parents and community members came out in strong support of the sexuality education program at a board meeting packed with more than 400 people. A physician who testified at

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the meeting said, "Whether we like it or not, the fundamental information at hand is that homosexuality is not considered a perversion....Those facts need to be told. We owe it to our students to teach them factual information."

Parents who sought restriction of the program threatened to punish more moderate board members at the polls, saying, "People aren't going to forget this. This isn't going to be the end of this....People know what they want in this curriculum and this isn't it." Despite the victory for the program, the controversy surrounding it continues to disturb some board members. Said one: "This past week was one of my darkest of my time on the school board. I don't see how a group that wraps itself around personal rights and family values can countenance such an attack."

INCIDENT: In Fairfax, objections to a play, written by three first-graders under the supervision of a parent, to be performed in front of classmates in a talented and gifted program, for using the words "naughty pig," "fool" and "mindless jerk." Expurgation requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: Months after the students had written the play, based on *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, the teacher demanded that the students remove the name-calling from the script one week before rehearsals were scheduled to begin. While she respected the teacher's need to maintain discipline in the classroom, the parent who supervised the students' creative project disagreed that the name-calling would "contribute to disruption." She was angry that the teacher would alter such a "tremendous accomplishment" for seven-year-olds and felt that the name-calling was a vital component to setting up conflict in the play. The teacher told the parent she would consult the principal and other faculty about the matter, but the school year ended before the situation was resolved. The parent maintained that "naughty pig," "fool" and "mindless jerk" do not qualify as obscene or vulgar language and thus should not be grounds for censoring students' speech — even for first-graders.

INCIDENT: In Leesburg, objections to *The Goose Girl*, an excerpt from "The Brothers Grimm" film series, shown to a fourth-grade class, for allegedly being too violent. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector filed a formal complaint against *The Goose Girl*, which aired on instructional television, and demanded that the film not be shown in the district in the future. A review committee appointed to examine and evaluate the film for content and appropriateness voted unanimously to retain it as part of the media collection. The superintendent upheld the committee's recom-

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mendation, opting to keep the movie, but the objector was not satisfied and appealed the decision to the school board. The school board voted to uphold the superintendent's and the review committee's decisions to retain the film.

INCIDENT: In Leesburg, objections to *Transworld Skateboarding* magazine, available in an elementary school library, for containing an advertisement mingling the lyrics of a Madonna song with surfing terms. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee deemed the popular publication "unsuitable" for elementary school readers. The magazine is now available only to middle and high school students.

INCIDENT: In Pulaski, objections to *The Scholastic Fun/Fact Book of Ghosts* by Christopher Maynard, available in an elementary school library, for being "anti-Christian." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee decided by consensus to retain the title, citing that "religious reasons, in and of themselves,...are not valid reasons to remove the book. We agree that the function of a school library is to provide materials on varying viewpoints, even controversial ones." The committee agreed that while they support parents' rights to determine their children's reading material, "they do not have the right to impose their views on the entire student body." The superintendent ignored the committee's recommendation and removed the book.

INCIDENT: In Stafford County, objections to *Revolting Rhymes*, *Matilda*, *The Witches*, *The Minpins*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *George's Marvelous Medicine*, all by Roald Dahl, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly encouraging children to disobey their parents and adults, and for crude language. Removal from library and classroom use requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a districtwide committee's unanimous vote and a school committee's recommendation to retain the books for library and classroom use. The objector has appealed the decision to the school board, and a vote is pending. The books were temporarily removed from the library for review purposes, but have since been reshelved. Parents can notify school officials if they do not want their children to read Dahl's books.

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The objector requested that *George's Marvelous Medicine* and *Revolting Rhymes* be removed from library and classroom use and that the other four books be moved to the library where access could be restricted. She expressed the view that *George's Marvelous Medicine* is a safety threat because one of the character's gives his grandmother a potion of paint thinner and soap, and *Revolting Rhymes* makes Cinderella "...look like a slut." In describing Dahl's books, the principal said, "The children do funny, stinky things to adults."

INCIDENT: In Stafford County, objections to *Seventeen* magazine, available in a middle school library, for a column about lesbianism and sexual arousal. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The superintendent upheld a districtwide committee decision and a school committee's unanimous vote to retain the magazine with the recommendation that parents notify school officials if they do not want their children to check out certain materials from the library. Rather than rely on an opt-out policy, which according to an objector, "puts all the pressure and responsibility on the librarian, and she can't handle that if she's got other duties," the objectors want students to have to ask for the magazine. Objectors have appealed the decision to the school board, and a board vote was pending as this report went to press.

The magazine was removed from the library during committee review, but has since been reshelved with an opt-out policy in place. Although the objectors feel the magazine is not age-appropriate, a teen-aged student subscriber to *Seventeen* stated, "It's everyday life. Kids have to learn about [sex and sexuality] somewhere, and most parents won't talk about these things." The editor-in-chief of *Seventeen* magazine claimed, "We've been answering questions for girls about their bodies since 1944. We don't tell them what to do or not do. That's up to them and their parents. We feel very strongly it's responsible and appropriate information we give to our readers, and it seems important more than ever to me that thoughtful information should be available to girls."

INCIDENT: In Virginia Beach, objections to the display of a Confederate flag beside a Union flag in a history class during a unit on the Civil War, on the grounds that it is offensive and insulting to African American children. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Teacher.

RESOLUTION: The principal ordered the flag removed from the classroom.

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STATE OVERVIEW

The View From Here, an assembly addressing issues of diversity, including sexual orientation, was challenged in Belfair and Blaine, for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Parents and students protested a speech by Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer, a lesbian, in honor of Women's History Month, and two students were beaten for being gay after they supported her appearance.

INCIDENT: In Bainbridge Island, objections to *Girls and Sex* and *Boys and Sex*, health and sexuality education books by Wardell Pomeroy, available in a middle school library, for presenting information that could be "detrimental to a student." The objector believed that the methods of masturbation that were mentioned "could be quite harmful physically to boys and girls" and that the books conveyed the message "don't worry about the law, avoid punishment, who cares what society thinks." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector refused to file a formal complaint and insisted "I am not interested in turning this into a censorship issue." Instead she elected to bring her concerns directly to the principal, requesting that the books be "replaced" with texts that are "more balanced" and promote abstinence. She suggested that the books be submitted to the District Health Committee and quietly removed from the library. The principal and school librarian, who specifically selected the books based on their substantive merits, refused to remove the books or subject them to evaluation by a review committee without a formal complaint. "Sure, there are things I might not like, but that's the ethics of my profession," said the librarian. "I take academic freedom very seriously."

INCIDENT: In Belfair, objections to *The View From Here*, an assembly produced by the Growth and Prevention Theatre Company, performed for ninth- and tenth-grade students, for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The principal immediately stopped the assembly, which is geared to stimulate thought and discussion about people who are perceived as different, when one of the cast members revealed to the student audience that he is gay. Several parents complained to the school and attended the school board meeting to express their concerns about a play with a "hidden agenda" that sought to "recruit" students into becoming homosexual. Many of those parents admitted that neither they, nor their children, had attended the performance. A letter was read to students and sent home to parents apologizing for the play whose content was "not anticipated" and "not presented as an acceptable lifestyle."

The community group that had initially arranged the group's performance demanded that the district immediately adopt and implement a policy stating that the schools would not use any materials that would present homosexuality as an acceptable "lifestyle." The school board refused to adopt such a policy but essentially blacklisted the theater company in neighboring school districts by warning other school systems not to invite the company to perform.

INCIDENT: In Blaine, objections to *The View From Here*, an assembly performed by the Growth and Prevention Theatre Company before middle and high school students, for allegedly promoting homosexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: The school district invited the Growth and Prevention Theatre Company to perform their assembly, which addresses gender stereotypes, sexual harassment and sexual orientation discrimination, after receiving an equity grant to promote diversity and increase social awareness among students. After being notified by a school staff member who objected to the content of the performance, a community member who home-schools his children wrote an incendiary column in the local newspaper lambasting the assembly and quoting sections out of context. Following a private meeting of community members and parents, a public meeting was held where school officials were questioned about their intentions in bringing the play to the school. According to a school official, the school was accused of promoting an "agenda," seeking to "re-educate" children being brought up in conservative homes and shutting parents out of the educational process. The objectors presented the school board with a resolution prohibiting future positive representations of homosexuality in the school system, and delivered a petition of signatures, many of which were from people outside the community, supporting the resolution. When the school board refused to comply with objectors' wishes, verbal threats were made about next year's board elections. When school administrators were attacked in the press, the mainstream ministerial association publicly supported the schools by writing letters to the newspapers. According to the assistant principal, the brunt of the controversy was borne by the students because of the "tremendous amount of time taken from the real mission of the school."

INCIDENT: In Bremerton, objections to *Hot Rod* magazine, available in an elementary school library, for containing pictures of scantily clad women and for being sexist. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the magazine, stating that it is the best car magazine available and has received positive reviews.

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INCIDENT: In Chehalis, objections to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, to be performed by high school students under the direction of their drama instructor, for allegedly containing potentially "adult themes." Cancellation requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: While the district has a formal policy to handle challenges to instructional material, no formal complaint was ever filed, thus preventing evaluation of the play by a review committee. The decision to cancel *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was made by the principal based upon a written complaint by a community member about a previous production of *South Pacific*, which allegedly contained "profanity and vulgarity." In response to his numerous attempts to discuss the complaints with the superintendent, the director was sternly reminded that he should "adhere to procedure." The director conceded, electing to produce a tightly edited version of Aristophanes' *The Birds*, and developing an agreement with the principal regarding future play selection. The director said, "I am beginning to wonder if they want a program that is progressive for the students, or one that caters to the whims of the religious conservatives. I believe in order to avoid controversy the district bends to the will of the minority who speaks loudest."

INCIDENT: In Everett, objections to *The Goose Girl* by Marguerite De Angeli, available in an elementary school library, on the grounds that it goes "beyond innocent imagination (and mystical powers) to a more morbid and violent wickedness." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the library but to restrict it to children in grades three through five on the grounds that it may be more appropriate for older children. Students in grades kindergarten through two may borrow the book only with parental or teacher permission.

INCIDENT: In Lakewood, objections to *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz, available in an elementary school library, on the grounds that the book "breeds a negative, demented and evil outlook on life." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book. Committee members noted that "students need access to a wide range of materials and opinions on subjects they find of interest," adding that several library review journals strongly approved of the book.

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INCIDENT: In Olympia, a decision to invite Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer to speak at an optional assembly at a high school in honor of Women's History Month set off a public debate.

Cammermeyer was invited to speak on the topic of women in the military; she is a Vietnam War veteran who was reinstated in the Washington National Guard when she sued over her discharge for stating that she is a lesbian.

The superintendent's office and school board members received a flood of letters and phone calls. One source estimates that nearly 300 people turned out at the school board meeting to discuss the issue, and that more than 100 people spoke at the meeting. "It's not an appropriate thing for a school assembly," said one student. "[She] is going to have to mention that she is a lesbian. It's a smack in the face of God to claim you are a homosexual." But another student called Colonel Cammermeyer "a great example of a woman who has fought for women's rights. She should have the right to talk about her fight in a man's world."

The school board decided to take no action in the matter, and the assembly proceeded as planned, in the presence of television cameras, police officers, and district officials. More than 250 students were absent from school that day, approximately 150 more than normal; according to the assistant superintendent, many parents had notified the school that they planned to keep their children home in protest. "We're going to pray for the people in the assembly, that they won't want to be a lesbian like her," said one student who did not attend the speech. In addition, two people were passing out free soft drinks to students who chose to leave the assembly.

Nearly 1000 students listened to Cammermeyer's address and, said one school staff member, "everyone was very well-behaved." More than 600 students gave the colonel a standing ovation.

A week after the assembly, two students who supported Cammermeyer's appearance were attacked by a gang and were told by one of the attackers that he "would not tolerate faggots in this area." Hundreds of local residents, the mayor, and Cammermeyer attended a rally to protest the bashing.

INCIDENT: In Richland, objections to the film *The Handmaid's Tale*, in use in a twelfth-grade advanced placement English class, for its R-rating. Request for the elimination of R-rated films from classroom instruction.

OBJECTOR: Parent, affiliated with the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: The class viewed the film before the controversy over showing an R-rated film escalated. The teacher had not informed the principal or required students to obtain parental permission because the class comprised fifteen 18-year-olds and three 17-year-olds. A formal complaint was not filed; instead, the parent presented the media with a petition of 978 signatures in opposition to

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showing R-rated films in school. This attention resulted in two heavily attended public hearings and three meetings with the "cabinet" (two superintendents and five directors of curriculum), and an administrative review.

The director of curriculum devised a policy to rate movies by educational appropriateness rather than by the Motion Picture Association of America rating system, "because the MPAA is not set up to evaluate instructional materials." This proposal was voted down at one of the review meetings. The proposal before the school board required parental notification for any film shown, with the option to opt out of the activity. As this report went to press, a school board evaluation of the proposal to determine whether or not a film policy will be written is still pending, and the objector has filed sexual harassment charges against the teacher and principal.

INCIDENT: In Seattle, objections to *Neither Here Nor There* by Bill Bryson, available in a high school library, for descriptions of deviant and illegal behavior, sexually explicit material that is degrading to women, and other content allegedly inappropriate for high school students. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The principal reviewed the request in accordance with the reconsideration policy, deemed the book appropriate for high school students and retained it.

INCIDENT: In Spokane, objections to *The Five Chinese Brothers* by Claire Huchet Bishop and Kurt Wiese, available in an elementary school library, for being "extremely violent" and for "legitimizing mob rule and the death penalty." The objector added that "the survival of the intended executee could create false expectations of surviving normally death-producing conditions." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book. The committee noted that "through the ingenuity of the five Chinese brothers, what [the objector] described as mob rule and violence were ultimately averted."

INCIDENT: In Spokane, objections to *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam, available in an elementary school library, for being "morbid." Wrote the objector, "The poem for the letter D appears to be a chant calling forth the devil." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

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RESOLUTION: The associate superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation to retain the book, but to place it in the part of the library only accessible to older children.

INCIDENT: In Spokane, objections to *Running Loose* by Chris Crutcher, optional reading in an eighth-grade classroom, for sexual content, objectionable language, and violence. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: District employee.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book.

INCIDENT: In Spokane, objections to *The Tale of the Dark* by Donna Bass, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly containing "demonically religious overtones" and presenting the "new age movement and the occult" as its main theme. The objector claimed that the book is a "parallelism between biblical prophesy and appears to be an attempt to distort and confuse the teaching of God." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector filed a formal complaint against the book, but a review committee will not consider the complaint until September.

INCIDENT: In Spokane, objections to *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold, available in an elementary school library, for containing "black stereotype[s]," specifically references to peanuts, fried chicken, watermelon and beer. "This is not the picture of black family life I would like my children to learn," wrote the objector. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The associate superintendent upheld a review committee's recommendation to retain the book. Committee members "concluded that the author was remembering her experiences as a child in Harlem and references to roasting peanuts, frying chicken, and watermelon were taken from the author's own background." Said the author in response to the challenge to her book, "I am a black person and I am expressing part of being American."

INCIDENT: In Spokane, objections to Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in use in ninth-grade English classes, on the grounds that "the setting dehumanizes the African American child. It is belittling the African American student and race." Removal from required assigned reading requested.

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OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: In response to a review committee's recommendations, the associate superintendent directed the following: that clear objectives, including "the social and historical context of the book," will be established for teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird*; that the district will "offer students the opportunity to select from a variety of novels" that meet the objectives; that "a study of student views of *To Kill a Mockingbird* will be undertaken immediately"; and that "the district will explore options for using the book in ways that will ensure that the potential for student harassment and an inappropriate learning environment...does not occur." The associate superintendent noted that "committee members were unanimous in their praise for the book."

INCIDENT: In Suquamish, objections to *Dr. Ruth Talks To Kids: Where You Came From, How Your Body Changes,* and *What Sex Is All About* by Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer, available in an elementary school library, for content "too detailed, graphic and confusing for elementary" students. Restricted access requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The principal and librarian decided to restrict the book to fifth- and sixth-grade students who receive parental permission for sexuality education instruction. The library will retain a list of eligible students to verify access to the book. With no formal complaint filed or reconsideration process in place, the principal removed the book from the library and told the librarian to remove all books related to sex from the shelves. The librarian refused and informed superiors of the principal's intent. Subsequently, the principal was reprimanded and the book was reinstated with restrictions.

INCIDENT: In Suquamish, objections to *On To Oregon* by Honore Morrow, in use in fourth-grade reading, for containing bias and offensive language to Native Americans. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and fourth-grade teachers.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted unanimously to remove the book from the reading list.

INCIDENT: In Yakima, objections to *July's People* by Nadine Gordimer; *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison; *Native Son* by Richard Wright; and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* by Carlos Fuentes, in use as part of the International Baccalaureate program, an elective college-level program for juniors and seniors, for profanity and images of violence and sexuality. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

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RESOLUTION: After the principal refused to remove the four novels from the program's prescribed reading list, the objector filed a formal complaint with the district and requested that the books be stricken from the program's curriculum. At an informal hearing, the nine-member citizen's committee voted to retain the novels, expressing the view that to remove the books "would set a precedent in which any one parent in the community, in effect, could dictate program content for the entire district." The committee forwarded its recommendation to the superintendent who upheld the committee's decision and said the books were appropriate for the program and intended for mature students. The objector appealed this decision to the school board, which voted separately on each of the four novels at a public hearing. The board voted 5-0 to retain *July's People*, and 4-1 to retain *Invisible Man, Native Son* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz*. The school board also unanimously adopted a motion to subject *The Death of Artemio Cruz* to a formal review for the 1995-96 school year and to instruct teachers to determine whether another Latin American book of comparable quality could be found to replace it.

INCIDENT: In Washington, a Parental Rights Amendment was introduced in both houses of the state legislature. The amendment is an attempt to ensure that the "rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children shall not be infringed." While neither amendment passed in this legislative session, the House held a public hearing on the initiative.

Opponents of the amendment voice concerns that the proposed legislation could give parents veto power over school library selections and classroom materials, giving one parent the ability to have materials removed regardless of other parents' wishes. In addition, many believe that the amendment could put children at risk by weakening existing labor laws and making it harder to investigate and prosecute child abuse.

STATE OVERVIEW

WEST VIRGINIA

In Kingwood, a high school principal canceled the performance of the play *Voices 2000* by the school's drama class after a parent objected to the use of profanity. The play, which deals with issues such as AIDS, smoking and self-esteem, was performed only twice before the objector, whose son had a part in the play, lodged her complaint.

INCIDENT: In Keyser, the school board denied the request of a group of teachers and a principal to show the Oscar-winning film *Schindler's List* to a high school class. Citing a policy permitting only G-rated films to be shown in school, the

WEST VIRGINIA

board president said that making an exception would force the board to review other movies on a case-by-case basis.

INCIDENT: In Kingwood, objections to *Voices 2000*, a play written by Peter Dee, to be performed by a high school drama class, for profanity, specifically the words "asshole" and "bitch," and references to homosexuality. The objector called the play "smut" and argued that, while the play deals with subjects teenagers confront every day, "should we display them on stage without also displaying the alternative and/or the things that are wrong with what they saw?" Cancellation requested as well as the implementation of a policy requiring that all materials intended for presentation in the county schools be approved by the school board.

OBJECTOR: Parent of a student in the play.

RESOLUTION: Three performances were canceled by the principal after the objector complained to school officials. Only one dress rehearsal for a health class and one evening performance were presented before the objector lodged her complaint. Sensitive to the mature content of the play, which is a series of monologues dealing with controversial issues such as AIDS, adoption, smoking and self-esteem, the drama teacher did not advertise for the production and included a disclaimer in the play's program alerting parents that the material in the play was not suitable for young children. While the teacher allowed students to substitute or omit language that they found offensive, the objector's 16-year-old son refused to omit the language and had no problem performing in scenes discussing homosexuality or sexual harassment.

In light of the parent's request that a policy be implemented requiring that all materials intended for presentation be previewed for content, the board of education is currently discussing the possibility of developing such a policy. The drama teacher and several parents objected to the policy, arguing that it would "add another layer of bureaucracy." The teacher, who has worked in the district for more than ten years, suggested sending home permission slips instead so that parents would be more informed. Said the teacher, "One of the reasons we put this on is to give parents a sounding board to talk with teenagers because I think sometimes parents are naive about what is happening with teenagers."

WISCONSIN

STATE OVERVIEW

In Hayward, the display of a Native American symbol for good luck during a cultural awareness week came under fire from a Christian Coalition member. Objections to a high school textbook included its failure to "explain that the sixteenth amendment to the Constitution is actually the second plank of the Communist Manifesto." A parent questioned the "moral

intent" of a book about James Baldwin, in a series called *Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians*, and argued that the book was an attempt to "lure" young children into a homosexual lifestyle.

WISCONSIN

INCIDENT: In Barron, objections to *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives*, by Ruth Bell, available in a high school library, for sexual content. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: Rekindling a debate that was sparked last year, a parent photocopied passages from the adolescent guide to sexuality and relationships and distributed them to parents and community members. The out-of-context passages contained printed letters from teenagers describing their emotions and experiences, some of them sexual, as they develop into adults. A formal complaint was filed, and a review committee voted to retain the book but to place it behind the librarian's desk where a student would specifically have to request it. The librarian was outraged by what she perceived to be a blatant act of censorship, rallied the support of other parents and filed a complaint to counter the recommendation of the review committee. Subsequently, the committee was forced to review the material again and voted 5-1 to retain the book without restrictions. The book was taken off the library shelf, however, and has not been returned.

INCIDENT: In Barron, objections to *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, on a suggested reading list to supplement the tenth-grade curriculum, for allegedly sexually explicit descriptions. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Curriculum director.

RESOLUTION: Following an informal complaint made by a parent, the curriculum director, in an apparent violation of the reconsideration policy, asked that the Pulitzer Prize-winning book be removed from the suggested reading list. She claimed that the list of over 250 books had never been approved by the school board, even though use of the list had been cited in board-approved curriculum, and insisted that deleting the book from the list was a curriculum issue, not a censorship issue. Responding to the tenth-grade teacher's view that the removal was merely a thinly veiled attempt to strike multiculturalism from the curriculum, the curriculum director argued that the book "never should have won the Pulitzer Prize," while another school official commented, "You're telling me that a white Norwegian woman couldn't have written this book?" Subsequently, an attorney for the teacher's union produced proof that the school board had indeed approved the list of supplementary books, prompting a compromise: the list would no longer be distributed to students as part of the tenth-grade curriculum but would hang in the library as a suggested reading resource for any interested students. *The Color Purple* is still available in the library and the teacher has additional copies that she is permitted to distribute to students upon request if the library copy is checked out.

WISCONSIN

INCIDENT: In Eau Claire, objections to *Human Growth and Development*, a sexuality education curriculum, in use in a ninth-grade health class, for references to birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A health advisory committee voted 12-2 to retain the sexuality education curriculum. They also stipulated that teachers must stress abstinence as an important aspect of birth control. Although abstinence is stressed in *Human Growth and Development*, objectors wanted to replace the curriculum, which has been in place for nearly 20 years, with an abstinence-only course that censored birth control and disease prevention information. A school board and committee member stated, "I favor teaching birth control as an alternative only. But if the kids are going to have sex they should have the right information to protect themselves."

INCIDENT: In Hayward, objections to *The Dream Catcher*, a Native American symbol for good luck constructed by students under the guidance of their teacher and displayed in the school library, for allegedly violating the separation of church and state. The objector claimed that the symbol, created as part of a celebration and study of the large Native American population in that area, was inherently religious and added, "A Cultural Awareness Week should be held outside the school in the community, where those who care to learn more about various cultures have the opportunity to do so....This type of education fast approaches the line between education and indoctrination, between merely informing and aggressively selling." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Chairman of the local chapter of the Christian Coalition.

RESOLUTION: In his address to the school board, the objector accused the school district of unfairly applying the separation of church and state and argued, "While Christians have to fight tooth and nail to have a simple two-minute prayer said at graduation, and be turned down, other religions are welcome with open arms to have a full week of speakers and festivities on school grounds during school hours." Several members of the Native American community responded to the objector's complaint, saying, "He makes it sound as though being Native American is a religious affiliation as opposed to a nationality" and that interpreting *The Dream Catcher* as a religious symbol "bears out the need to have cultural awareness taught in the schools...to learn about and celebrate the culture of 25 percent of its student body." A policy committee, formed to investigate the objector's allegations, concluded that *The Dream Catcher* was not a religious symbol but a cultural symbol and that it was being taught for "educational and instructional purposes -- not indoctrination." During his address to the school board, the objector took the opportunity to further his own political agenda saying, "It is incidents like this that make a compelling argument for school choice." *The Dream Catcher* remains hanging in the school library.

WISCONSIN

INCIDENT: In Kenosha, a court upheld the authority of the school board to ban R-rated films, in a lawsuit brought by a high school student challenging the policy. The board had denied the social studies department's request to bus high school students who had obtained parental permission to a showing of the Oscar-winning film, *Schindler's List*. Over 400 other students had also protested the board's decision by signing a petition asking the board to reconsider. Said the school's principal, who had asked the superintendent for an exception to the policy, "We have students here who doubt that the Holocaust happened. We have a few students with racist views. That's why we wanted to give it one last try."

INCIDENT: In Madison, objections to *James Baldwin* by Randall Kenan from the *Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians* series, available in a middle school library, because the objector felt "the main theme of this book is to make gay and lesbian lifestyle appear attractive and acceptable." The objector took issue with the title of the series, which she said was "being used as enticement," and questioned the "moral intent of this selection" which she argued was specifically written for elementary and middle school children in an attempt to "lure" and "attract children at an early age to the gay and lesbian lifestyle." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The objector became aware of the book when it was on display at the library during Back to School Night. She immediately made an oral complaint to the librarian and then filled out a formal complaint requesting that the book be removed, saying, "This is not an issue of respect for another's choices, rather a position of not having it presented to my child or other innocent children." The principal responded to the objector's complaint in writing and offered to meet with her at her convenience. The objector never requested a meeting and the book remains in circulation.

INCIDENT: In Oshkosh, objections to *Human Growth and Development*, a sexuality education curriculum, in use in elementary school health classes, for alleged age-inappropriateness, co-ed classes, and teaching body-part terminology related to the reproductive system. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents and teachers.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 6-1 to uphold the health advisory committee's recommendation to separate fourth- and fifth-grade boys and girls during sex education instruction. The school board also approved the health advisory committee's recommendation that sexuality education teachers not use the terms "anus, penis, genitals, urethra and vagina" in grades kindergarten through three, but correct students if they use slang or improper terminology for these body parts. According to a school official, some parents "felt the children were too young, [and] some questioned whether children needed to know the correct terminology for body parts."

WISCONSIN

INCIDENT: In Oshkosh, objections to a mural painted by several high school students, on display in a high school English classroom, for being sexually explicit and promoting rebellion. Objectors further claimed that the mural amounted to destruction of public property. One objector called the work "offensive" and claimed that the teacher was imposing his ideology on the "misguided and brainwashed students." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School board member, superintendent, and community members, one of whom chairs the Oshkosh Concerned Taxpayers Alliance.

RESOLUTION: Following complaints about one mural in the classroom, the school board ordered the removal of twelve murals from the classroom walls. The board also disciplined the English teacher, although details of the disciplinary action taken against him are confidential.

The contested mural was part of a creative writing lesson about expression through graffiti and included such statements as "English rules are stupid" and "school sucks." According to the teacher, the lesson, which included students painting slogans on the wall and analyzing their experience, yielded one of the "most creative and dynamic discussions" he remembers having in the classroom.

INCIDENT: In Richland Center, objections to *American Government: Principles and Practices*, a textbook in use in high school government classes, for "inaccurate conclusions, incorrect statements, omissions, historical inaccuracies, [and] false premises." According to the objector, the text "does not explain that the sixteenth amendment to the Constitution is actually the second plank of the Communist Manifesto....I opine that Marx would be well pleased to know our children are studying from the *American Government* text." She added that the texts "are promoting world democracy, and our children are being molded into one-worlders oblivious of their own heritage." The objector proposed that the district "[discard] these insidious and grossly flawed textbooks and [teach] our children directly from the *Federalist Papers*." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent, affiliated with the John Birch Society.

RESOLUTION: The school board upheld a review committee's unanimous recommendation to retain the textbook. Committee members, who consulted with a local university professor, "found no evidence of the factual errors in the text alleged by the complainant" and "found no evidence of false conclusions in the text." They added that teaching students directly from the *Federalist Papers* would not provide students with information about how our government has developed since the eighteenth century.

INCIDENT: In Warrens, objections to *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, in use in a sixth-grade reading class, for fantasy, dialogue discussing God's char-

WISCONSIN

acter, a scene in which a see-through blouse is purchased, and the use of the words "Good Lord." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parents.

RESOLUTION: A review committee voted to retain the book in the classroom. In response to the challenge, the district will send out regular newsletters to inform parents of books being used in the classroom.

INCIDENT: In Washington County, objections to *Schindler's List*, a film to be shown in tenth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade English and History classes, for nudity. Cancellation requested.

OBJECTOR: Principal.

RESOLUTION: The incident began last year when the principal rejected a proposed field trip to the local theater to see the film, claiming that it was too late in the year for such a trip. After a community member donated a videotape of the movie to the school, a new principal told the teacher not to show the film in the same classes because of "nudity." According to one teacher, "subtle censorship is the norm around here."

INCIDENT: In Wisconsin, Governor Tommy Thompson led the drive to pass an amendment to existing tuition voucher legislation. While the state already has a limited voucher plan in place in Milwaukee, the governor seeks to expand the program to include public funding for religious schools, despite the fact that a federal court recently ruled that including religious schools in the Milwaukee voucher program would violate the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state. The Governor stated that the court's decision "will not deter our efforts" to implement the plan, which has already been incorporated into the state budget proposal.

An expert from the University of Wisconsin evaluating the amendment concluded that the expansion will cost the state "an enormous amount of money" and "dramatically affect the separation of church and state." The amendment has been passed by both legislative houses and is expected to be signed into law by the governor in August.

WYOMING

STATE OVERVIEW

A comprehensive sexuality education curriculum was challenged in Cody for references to birth control and sexually transmitted diseases, and in Powell, access to *Seventeen* magazine was restricted in a middle school library.

INCIDENT: In Afton, objections to *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and *When Legends Die* by Hal Borland, under consideration for adoption in twelfth-grade social studies and ninth-grade western literature classes, for frequent occurrence of obscenities and profanity, specifically the use of the word "fuck" in the former and "Goddamn" in the latter. Rejection of the books requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: The books were rejected by the school board for classroom use, but remain available in the high school library. These books were two of 250 to 300 books from prior curriculum use to be reviewed under a new adoption policy.

INCIDENT: In Cody, objections to a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, in use in a tenth-grade health class, for references to birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. An objector stated, "If I had my way, I wouldn't allow any mention of things such as breast cancer and self-examination, cancer of the testicles and self-examination, menstruation...and the like in a co-ed setting." Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: School board members.

RESOLUTION: The school board voted 4-3 to retain the curriculum. In January of 1994, the school board had approved a sex education curriculum for the first time since the 1970s. It was implemented this school year for a one-year trial period, but objections surfaced in January of 1995 from school board members who had opposed the curriculum. The objectors wanted the curriculum to stress abstinence and eliminate all references to birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. There were also objections to a "building relationships" segment that mentioned homosexuality, and to a segment on cancer self-examination instruction that one objector claimed was "teaching kids to touch themselves."

Parental permission was required for participation in the sexuality education curriculum and 96 percent of parents and guardians consented. According to a school official, more than 90 percent of the students think sex education is very important because it is not being taught at home.

WYOMING

INCIDENT: In Powell, objections to *Seventeen* magazine, available in a middle school library, for allegedly printing articles with sexual terms and photographs of models wearing scanty clothes. Removal requested.

OBJECTOR: Parent.

RESOLUTION: Following a formal complaint, the review committee voted to restrict the popular magazine to eighth-grade students. While the decision was not made until after the school library closed for the school year, the librarian, who would be responsible for enforcing the restriction, predicted that the experience would be "unpleasant" and that students would be disappointed.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

MOST FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED BOOKS AND MATERIALS 1994-95

More Scary Stories To Tell in the Dark, Alvin Schwartz

Scary Stories To Tell in the Dark, Alvin Schwartz

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

Schindler's List, Steven Spielberg

The Giver, Lois Lowry

Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones, Alvin Schwartz

Halloween ABC, Eve Merriam

Values and Choices [Comprehensive Sexuality Education Program]

Seventeen [Magazine]

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson

The Chocolate War, Robert Cormier

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

My Brother Sam Is Dead, Christopher and James Lincoln Collier

APPENDICES

MOST FREQUENTLY CHALLNEGED AUTHORS 1982-95

Judy Blume

Alvin Schwartz

Stephen King

John Steinbeck

Robert Cormier

J.D. Salinger

Roald Dahl

Mark Twain

Katherine Paterson

Maya Angelou

APPENDICES

MOST FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED BOOKS
1982-95

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

The Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger

Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, Alvin Schwartz

The Chocolate War, Robert Cormier

More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, Alvin Schwartz

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

Go Ask Alice, anonymous

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson

The Witches, Roald Dahl

APPENDICES

MOST FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED MATERIALS 1982-95

Impressions [textbook series]

Pumsy in Pursuit of Excellence [self-esteem program]

Quest [self-esteem program]

Developing Understanding of Self and Others [self-esteem program]

Rolling Stone [magazine]

YM [magazine]

Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education

Romeo and Juliet [film]

Sports Illustrated [magazine]

Schindler's List [film]

Junior Great Book Series [reading texts]

APPENDICES

STATES WITH THE MOST CHALLENGES
1982-95

California

Texas

Oregon

Florida

Washington

Pennsylvania

New York

Michigan

Ohio

Iowa

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY
is grateful to all of the individuals and organizations that provided information and assistance to us as we researched and prepared Attacks on the Freedom to Learn.

First and foremost, we want to acknowledge the parents, students, teachers, librarians, administrators and community activists who alerted us to incidents in their communities. Without their assistance we could not have published this report.

More importantly, without their courage and willingness to get involved, censorship would be an even more serious problem. We commend them for standing up to the censors.

There are also a number of organizations around the country that have provided us with valuable information about censorship incidents, and we want to express our gratitude to them as well.

American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom

ALA Intellectual Freedom Committees in the following states:

Arkansas	Kansas
Alaska	Maine
Illinois	Michigan
Indiana	Minnesota
Iowa	Vermont

Florida Coalition Against Censorship

National Center for Science Education

New Hampshire Family Planning Council

Ohio Education Association

Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)

Publications

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY

Your Voice Against Intolerance

Censorship In the Schools

PUBLICATIONS

An Activist Guide to Protecting the Freedom to Learn, 1994, kit **$11.95/13.95**
Provides information and tools for organizing pro-public education advocates to combat censorship efforts, defend public schools from political attacks, and participate in school board races.

Attacks on the Freedom to Learn, 1994-1995, 242 pp. **$12.95/14.95**
Documents state-by-state challenges to instructional materials in public schools.

VIDEOTAPES (VHS)

Vista: A Battle for Public Education, 1995, 11 mins. **$24.95/29.95**
Documentary on one California community's successful response to a Religious Right takeover of the local school board. A compelling call to action.

Redondo Beach: A Stand Against Censorship, 1990, 14:20 mins. **$15.00/20.00**
Documentary on a community's successful resistance to school censorship.

Censorship in Our Schools: Hawkins County, TN, 1987, 18:50 mins. **$15.00/20.00**
Documentary on community battle over challenge to reading materials. ***3/4" version available for $30.00***

Censorship In the Arts

PUBLICATIONS

Artistic Freedom Under Attack, Volume III, 1995, 140 pp. **$12.95/14.95**
Documents state-by-state challenges to artistic expression in 1994.

Tucson Talks: A Search For Common Ground, 1994, 40 pp. **$5.95/6.95**
Examines a recent censorship case and how **People For the American Way's artsave project** worked with a local community exposing intolerance and building free expression.

Protecting Artists and Their Work, 1993, 75 pp. **$5.95/6.95**
A summary of federal and state laws protecting art and artists.

artsave Technical Assistance Kit, 1992, kit. **$4.95/5.95**
Guide to battling art censorship.

When two prices are listed, the first price is for People For members.

Church / State

PUBLICATIONS

Twelve Rules for Mixing Religion and Politics, 1994. ..... **$5.95/6.95**
Guidelines for appropriate involvement of religion in politics.

Religious Right

PUBLICATIONS

Winning Through Reason, Not Fear:
Meeting the Challenge of the Religious Right, 1994, 50 pp **$9.95**
Lessons of a national survey of public attitudes toward the Religious Right and the values debate.

Right-Wing Watch, newsletter. **$15.00/year**
Tracks political activities of the radical right.

Hostile Climate: A State-By-State Report on Anti-Gay Activity, 1994, 92 pp. **$6.95/7.95**
Documents anti-gay incidents nationwide in legislative, court, and ballot arenas.

The San Diego Model: A Community Battles the Religious Right, 1993, 63 pp. **$5.95/6.95**
A model and primer on community organizing to counter the Religious Right.

How to Win:
A Practical Guide for Defeating the Radical Right in Your Community, 1994, 250 pp. ... **$22.95/25.95**
Comprehensive guide to issues and organizations; tactics for resisting radical right.

Teaching Fear: The Religious Right's Campaign Against Sexuality Education, 1994, 26 pp. ... **$5.95/6.95**
Traces the history of Religious Right opposition to sexuality education, identifies the groups and individuals leading the charge, describes controversies in local school districts, and summarizes current data on the effectiveness of sexuality education curricula.

A Turn to the Right: A Guide to Religious Right Influence in the 103rd/104th Congress
Documents Religious Right activity in the 103rd Congress, and describes upcoming Religious Right battles in the 104th Congress. 1995, 64 pp **$7.95/9.95**

VIDEOTAPES (VHS)

The Religious Right: In Their Own Words, 1993, 8 mins. **$15.00/25.00**
Documents extreme rhetoric of major religious right leaders.

Youth and Tolerance

PUBLICATIONS

Invisible Walls: A Study of Racial Division and the Challenge of Building Bridges of Understanding in the Saint Paul, MN Area Public Schools, 1994, 48 pp. **$6.95/7.95**
In-depth survey of students' and teachers' attitudes toward race relations, and local pilot program.

STAR Brochure (Students Talk About Race). ..... **One copy free**
Describes STAR program; college students lead high school students in discussions on diversity.

First Vote Brochure, 1993. ..... **One copy free**
Describes citizenship/voter registration program for high school students.

First Vote Teaching Unit, 1993, 16 pp. **$3.00**
Democracy and citizenship curriculum companion to *First Vote Video*.

Democracy's Next Generation: A Study of Youth and Teachers, 1989, 204 pp. **$9.95/11.95**
Explores youth attitudes and values on citizenship, civic participation, politics and voting.

Democracy's Next Generation II:
A Study of American Youth on Race, 1992, 190 pp. **$9.95/11.95**
Examines race relations and racial divisions among young people.

Hate in the Ivory Tower:
A Survey of Intolerance on College Campuses and Academia's Response, 1991, 80 pp. ... **$8.95/10.95**
Documents growth of intolerant behavior on campuses and provides guidelines for response.

VIDEOTAPES (VHS)

STAR: A New Dialogue About Diversity, 1993, 8 mins. **$15.00/25.00**
Classroom footage showing STAR race relations program in action.

First Vote, 1990, 17:06 mins. **$95.00**
Part of First Vote high school program on citizenship and voting.

General

PUBLICATIONS

Congressional Handbook (1995-1996). **$9.95**
Lists Members of Congress, committee assignments, and addresses and phone numbers. *($6.50 each for orders of 10 or more)*

People for the American Way/Action Fund Membership Brochure. ..... **One copy free**
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